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THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE CIVIL POWER AND THE
CHURCH IN MEXICO

By

Jose Raoul Flores

Graduate of Saint Andrews School,
Guadalajara, Mexico.

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APPROVED:

Henry M. Shires
Instructor

Henry W. Shires
Dean

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The city of Tenechtitlan (today Mexico City), fell on August 13, 1521, and with its fall a great civilization passed into history. The great temple was torn down; Cuauhtemoc, the last Aztec emperor, was villainously tormented to disclose the treasures of his people. The Spanish enemies of Cortez receded before his colossal fait accompli, and the King of Spain appointed him Governor General, with grants of land as vast as European nations. From the conquered city files of men in armour, supported by armies of Tlaxcallans and other allies, made their laborious way north, south and west, to consolidate the conquest. One by one the peoples of the plateau were subdued, their temples overthrown, their leaders killed, the surplus products of their lands taken by the adventurers and the clerics who followed the looting armies.

The fall of Tenochtitlan marked the opening of a new chapter in the history of Mexico, characterized by the attempt to replace one civilization by another culturally, politically, and religiously different. Sociologists and economists and historians, however, tell us that such replacement was never entirely accomplished. In fact, we are told, the present social movement in Mexico, the Revolution, is the attempt to liquidate all marks and vestiges of Spanish and European culture, and a revival of the Indian life and race.¹

See Chase, S., "Mexico", pp. 80 ff.; Tannenbaum, F., PBR, pp. 3-67; Brenner, A., IBA, pp. 127-128.

That the conquest was never completed is evident in the life of the people of Mexico of today; but one cannot conceive how the liquidation of all that is not Indian can be effected. The Spanish domination of three centuries has established unbreakable links which join closely all that once were the Spanish colonies with the mother country. It would be more accurate to say, in my estimation, that the principles of the Mexican Revolution are the principles for which the mass of the Mexican people have fought for centuries, namely, the principles of democracy.²

Ever since the Spanish conquest the Mexicans have been accustomed to the domination of the masses by the classes. Absolutely unable to use all the privileges or to exercise all the duties of full civil and political citizenship when granted, they nevertheless held liberty as an ideal to be striven for. With blundering steps and many setbacks, with numerous upheavals³ which have characterized Mexico as a land of revolutions, the people are advancing to secure the prize. It is this series of struggles which the present essay seeks to trace, bearing in mind that, while a few leaders will be most prominent in the picture, it is really the mass of the Mexican people that are striving to secure freedom.

In the contest, the most important factor has been the Roman Catholic Church. As will be seen, its

2. See Callcott, W. H., CSM, pp. 322-324.

3. Lerdo de Tejada counts seventy; LRN, p. 24.

enormous economic interests and its control of education, made it dominant in the political and social life of the country. It naturally became associated with the upper classes. When the "fueros" (special privileges) have been attacked, the protection of its own privileges has caused it to plunge at once into the strife. For the same reason the army has often been ranged by its side. Thus the struggle has at times taken on a more ominous aspect. Joined with these two groups have been the great landholders. Conservatives by instinct, they wish to see perpetuated the regime under which they have flourished. The Church, aided always by most of the prominent men in civil affairs, is engaged in a struggle with the great masses of the people who, especially since the Independence, have been championed by a group of skilful leaders, who rose as a result of a conversion to the principles of French philosophy and of the democracy of the United States. Thus our purpose will be twofold: to find out what the position of the Church has been in the development of the country, and to discover to what extent the restrictions are justified which the Governments of the Revolution have placed upon her.

Although under the cloak of the Revolution there have appeared here and there radical and communist outbursts and other movements no less dangerous to the national welfare than all those instigated by the clergy, the program of the Revolution does not seek to extirpate

religion as such from the country; rather, one of its purposes is, by means of laws and decrees, to define the sphere of action of an organization of a necessarily spiritual character, which has made use of all legal and illegitimate means to possess the greatest possible amount of material elements, and with the moral and material slavery of the people has made it impossible for any political organization to undertake a vigorous program of government that seeks only the social and economic well-being of the country.

In order to have a full understanding of the campaign which has been instituted against the Church, it is necessary to note the profound vices which that organization has brought into Mexico, and organization which today is protesting against the Mexican laws, forgetting that a just desire led the people to the suppression of all those privileges which made them a people subject to a foreign power, and which not only deprived them of all their possessions but did also link all the acts of their private life to the clergy's own interests. In this connection former President Rodriguez declared: "The campaign to destroy the religious prejudices which have dominated education in Mexico, can be considered as the personal work of no public officer, but as the crystallization of a popular desire and the practical realization of a revolutionary principle, and of a social tendency which it is our duty to hold, if we want to be

sincere to ourselves and to the ideas for whose triumph
⁴
we have fought."

We must note the clause "to destroy the religious prejudices which have dominated education in Mexico", for in these few words is expressed one of the concrete purposes of the present administration, set forth more specifically in Article III of the Constitution which begins with the sentence: "The education that the State imparts shall be socialistic". What is meant by "socialistic education" we shall see in a later chapter; it is sufficient to note here that in its program are included two other of the purposes of the Revolution. The first is expressed in the words of the late President Obregon: "To guide all the people of Mexico along the path of morality, virtue and brotherhood--using those terms in their broadest sense--aiming on the bases of these purposes to achieve a greater well-being for the ⁵ national life". The second is expressed in the words of former President Calles: "To combat all that which tends to divide the Mexican people into classes or casts".⁶

As we shall see later, socialistic education has been subject to elaborate discussions and criticisms among all social circles, and because of the fact that some of its implications are decidedly anti-clerical,

4. Portes Gil, E., LPCC, p. 8.

5. Beals, C., Mexico, p. 177.

6. Portes Gil, E., LPCC, p. 105.

the Church authorities and leaders have been bitterly opposed to it. In general terms the causes of their non-conformity arise from their immense wealth and the enormous extension of territorial property in the hands of the Church, energetically counter-checked by the Reformation Laws, the 1917 Constitution and the effective action of the Governments of the Revolution; from the conclusion of a regime of privileges and extraordinary concessions; from the liberation of the consciences oppressed by a burdening regime of material forces, and dogmas that hindered the study of the problems of the universe in accordance with the knowledge furnished by the natural and social sciences; and from the exclusion of ecclesiastics from politics, and the restriction of their activities to the spiritual field of action.

It is very difficult to conceive that the Church in Mexico will enjoy the same honor and respectability as it does in other democratic countries unless it adapts itself to the current circumstances and transitions which the world is undergoing, and unless it gives up the hopes of the restoration of the privileges which once enjoyed under entirely different circumstances; unless, in other words, it adapts itself to the legislation of the country which seeks nothing but the well-being and the advancement of the Mexican people. In effect, let it be remembered what former President Calles indicated on July 25, 1926: "Absorbed as the attention of the Federal Government was,

by the huge problems of the administration and by the solution of the grave affairs which affect the development of Mexico, and in the fulfillment of its internal and external obligations, it had forgotten the eternal enemy, the native and foreign clergy in Mexico, and the politicians and agitators who have prospered under the Church's wings, when the Chief of the Catholic Church, on the anniversary of the Federal Constitution, made or permitted the reproduction of an old document wherein the leaders of the Mexican clergy repudiated publicly the Constitution of the Republic".⁷ In the face of such a discordant attitude of the clergy, General Calles expressed his determination to retaliate for every new manifestation of animosity, or opposition or hindrance to the administrative tasks of his Government, with new measures of repression of those who disobeyed or disavowed the laws of Mexico.

The Political Code of Mexico contains the great principles that rule the State, and consequently, the principle that the religious groups, as any other associations, ought to subordinate themselves to its statutes and laws, constitutes one of the bases of our constitutional system. A publisher affirms: "The struggle with the clergy is in such a way identified with the essence of the principles of the Mexican Revolution, that it is impossible to find within the last twenty years a more

7. Portes Gil, E., LPCC, p. 10.

important moment of our public life which is not related in a way more or less direct to the struggle against the Church, its economic problem, and the domination of the consciences achieved during four centuries of almost absolute hegemony".⁸

Indeed, in this thesis it really will be painful to show, pointing at the pages of the history of Mexico, the clergy's lack of encouragement of, and their constant opposition to, any hint of progress, modification, or evolutionary step, indispensable for the advancement of the culture and civilization of a nation. More especially has this been so if any such progressive enterprise barely affected their numerous interests which they have always defended passionately, and held even above such civic duties as nationality and allegiance to the country. Their behaviour is entirely the opposite of that of other Christian churches in other democratic countries.

8. Ibid.

CHAPTER II
THE COLONIAL PERIOD

II. THE COLONIAL PERIOD

The powerful influence of tradition and history, the identity of aspirations and common necessities, have united the Mexicans into the social organization of the present day which, though differing ethnically, culturally, and politically from the ancient groups and from Spain, form a historical chain which unifies them.

The origin of the Mexican nationality is found in the fusion of races that followed the Conquest. The original natives which inhabited the plateau did not present a complete ethnical or political unity, nor other similar characteristics, but rather were antagonistic groups, as the Aztecs and the Tlaxcallans, this being a most advantageous circumstance for the Spaniards, inasmuch as the conquest was effected with the conquered's own elements.

Pope Alexander VI's Bull "Inter Caetera", dated May 4, 1493,¹ brought to an end the conflict between the rights of Spain and Portugal with regard to the lands to be discovered by tracing a line 370 leagues off the Azores and Cabo Verde. All the lands to be discovered west of it were to belong to Spain, and those discovered east of it were to go to Portugal.

1. See Gottschalk, P., EDDA.

Pallares² points out that "in the Middle Ages there were two titles to secure sovereignty over the conquered peoples were heathen; or it could be secured by the adjudication of the Pope to the kings. The first of these titles was attacked by Francisco Victoria in the University of Salamanca; the other was generally accepted by the Catholic monarchs. 'In giving to St. Peter' said Pope Gregory VII, 'the power to forgive and to retain in heaven and on earth, God has made exceptions to no one, and everything was within his rule. God has endowed the Pope with all principalities, with all the dominions of the universe; He has made him lord of all kings on the universe'. Isidore's false decretals, apocryphal source during many centuries of the Pope's power and of other ecclesiastical abuses, contained the alleged donation of Constantine on behalf of the Pope, of nearly all the world and the islands. Taking this as a basis Pope Urban II said in 1095: 'quia religiosi Imperatoris Constantini privilegio in jus propium Beato Pedro Ejusque sucesoribus occidentalis omnes insulae condonatae sunt.' Using the support of this apocryphal code Adrian IV granted Henry II of England sovereignty over Ireland; in 1344 Clement VI granted Luis de la Cerda rulership over the Canary Islands; the king of Portugal secured from Pope Martin V the investiture of the lands to be discovered by him in 1452;

2. Pallares, J., LFC, p. VI.

Nicholas V granted Alphonse of Portugal the right to fight and reduce into slavery the Saracens and other infidels; in 1454, he extended this right to include the heathen of Africa; on May 3, 1493, the Pope granted the Kings of Spain similar rights; and finally, the Bull of May 4, 1493, was decreed, probably at the request of the Ambassador of Spain in Rome, a Bull which gave place to various controversies on account of its geographic inaccuracy, which was finally settled in Tordillas on June, 7, 1594".

The study of the historical circumstances responsible for this Bull, the situation of the Papacy and the conquering countries, does not furnish the exact facts to affirm, as Catholic writers do, that the Bull in question was an effort of the Church to pacify America, avoiding the serious conflicts between the conquering nations, Spain and Portugal. The right of conquest and occupation was not enough to justify fully the plunder of the lands of the New World; it was necessary that a spiritual authority, hiding behind a personal interest, should have begun by recognising or defining the natives' rights.

The consequences of the Bull were important: by virtue of the concession made, the lands of the Indies were declared by the kings of Spain to belong, not to the Spanish nations, but to their royal patrimony. The concession of the Pope implied also the closing of the Colonies to Protestant immigrants and the obligation to catholicize the

natives, and the grant of tithes and the ecclesiastical patronage to the Spanish kings. The Pope, in turn, saw in his action the opening of a new prospective of fabulous wealth, for every conqueror would be followed by an ecclesiastic at the Pope's service.

Mexico was conquered by a group of adventurers of great courage, but dominated by enormous cruelty. by an inexhaustible desire for gold, and a rude mentality. Later on these adventurers became the hateful "encomenderos," (Spanish commissionaires who were given an allotment of territory with its inhabitants employed in their service). Some of them, once they had secured the wealth they wanted, took on the religious habit that they might live a life of privilege. Some Catholic writers, who have made attempts to justify the intemperance of conquerors and ecclesiastics, are mistaken when they argue that the conquest was a holy war. The data furnished by contemporary historians show no evidence in this direction. The spirit of adventure and personal gain led the Spanish hosts, not their desire to catholicize the conquered peoples.¹

The Spanish conquest was a materialistic war, a conquest decidedly economic. The Spanish civilization was higher than that of the native tribes; Spanish culture, language, military organization, industrial achievements were superior; but the ideal of the conquest was not that

1. Cf. Crighton, F. W., OH, p. 16.

of diffusing superior knowledge.¹ These things spread themselves by virtue of the circumstance and, with the exception of a few missionaries, the economic motive occasioned the acts of the clergy as much as those of the conquerors. The mines, the lands, the "encomiendas", the Indians themselves who were nothing but human chattels: such were their objectives.

Misunderstanding of Indian psychology has always existed in the history of Mexico. This may be seen in the energetic terms with which the defender of the Indians, Diego Rodriguez Bibanco, expressed to King Philip II, the mistreatment of the Indians, in his letter sent from Merida on March 8, 1563. Further evidence is found in the letter that the Indian governors of several provinces in Yucatan addressed to the same King on April 12, 1567, complaining against "the torments, abuses, and punishments to which the Indians were submitted by the monks of the order of St. Francis."²

Hernan Cortes, an intelligent man of resolution and courage, accepted the cooperation of the monks in the development of his plans, not only as chaplains of his own armies, but as instruments to convince the natives of the uselessness of their resistance to the invader's superior weapons. But after Cortes died, soldier and monk entered into controversies and conflicts with regard

1. Chase, S., "Mexico," p. 81.

2. See CI pp. 392ff and 407.

to the right, equally claimed by both, over the Indians, their labor and their possessions. Mendieta shows us the extent reached by these disputes. Not less fiery, on the other hand, were the conflicts between the religious orders and the secular clergy. It is interesting to note that Mendieta, a Franciscan monk, does not hesitate to uncover the vices of those of his own order as well as those of others. He says: "The monks were not exempt from making mistakes, if not of equal magnitude, certainly of greater transcendence, on account of the respectability of the interests committed to their care and of the perpetual character given them by the hierarchic organization of the monastic orders, the works undertaken in the conversion of idolaters whose value we shall discuss later".¹

He adds that their desire to found monasteries led them to use oppressive means; and the insistence to exclude from their work other elements alien to their order, but especially the secular clergy, and the influence which they had acquired, gave place to constant and ardent complaints both from the civil authorities and from the bishops, who could not tolerate such a disgraceful impairment in their pastoral jurisdiction.²

In spite of these complaints, charges and accusations, the unlimited resources of the country awakened the greed of the clergy, both regular and secular, until,

1. Mendieta G., HEI, c. LVII.

2. See Mendoza, L. T., CDI, Vol. IV, p. 491 ff.

as we shall see, the Church became financially the most powerful institution in the country. Its economic and political sway has been one of the most serious obstacles in the development of our economic and social institutions.

Alonso Gonzalez was the first priest to come to Mexico; he was the chaplain in Cortes' army, which landed in Cape Catoche on March 5, 1517. Later on, when the conquest had spread, when the fabulous wealth of the Indies became known in Spain, emigration from that country began to send their missions of Franciscans, Augustinians, and Dominicans, increasing day after day the number of monks and secular priests and beginning the conquest of wealth and its enormous accumulation. Donations, favors from the conquerors, privileges, concessions, were other factors which encouraged the immigration of missionaries.

Of course, the noble work of the first missionaries must be acknowledged by its merits and self-sacrificing spirit. For them the conquest was a spiritual mission; their moral qualities were unquestionable. History shows us that they were men of kindness, sincerity and devotion. Tecto, Gaona, Focher, had been men in high positions; Gante, Witte, and Daciano felt royal blood coursing in their veins; yet, one and all, they deserted lucrative sinecure posts and brilliant careers to pioneer in a foreign and unsettled land, in order to teach Indians how to read and write and be Christians. Nothing is more

fascinating and inspiring than the stories of the early friars, such as Junipero Serra and Magan Catala, who founded missions from Central America to California, suffering incredible hardships and discouragements. But history tells us also that after the first fire of proselyting was extinguished, the Church was ruled by its strange greediness, which was also the root of the shameful acts of cruelty and immorality both of the conqueror and of the priest.¹

In this connection Dr. Mora indicates: "If subsequently the monastic institutes were weakened, this can by no means diminish the merit of the first missionaries. It is true that they introduced in Mexico certain capital errors and certain maxims of conduct which have been and are today very harmful to the social order; but these errors were not theirs but of their times, when they were so common in the world, and applauded as principles of the sanest way of procedure. If it is just, opportune and reasonable to reject and combat them by force, we can do it without offending the memory of those who in good faith did profess and introduce them with the purest intention".² Furthermore, we must consider this interesting commentary of Toro: "As to the Mexican Church, it was founded by friars. As soon as the conquest of Mexico by Cortes became known, three Flemish Franciscans were

1. Cf. Beals, C., Mexico, p. 163

2. Mora, J. M. L., MR, Vol. I, p. 272

sent: Fante, Tacht, and Van Ahor; they came to the country to convert the Indians, establishing schools to teach them the Christian doctrine, how to read and how to write, chanting and some European crafts. The work of these missionaries was truly useful and civilizing. Later on, with the consent of the King and the Pope, came twelve Spanish Franciscan friars, carefully selected among the best elements to be found in the monasteries of Spain, who were the true founders of the Mexican Church. Many commendations have been made by historians of the work of these missionaries; were they to be believed, in a very short time they converted to the Catholic religion millions of Indians and brought idolatry to an end. The basis for these commendations is none other than the data furnished by those concerned, as fathers Motolinia and Mendieta, or the Franciscan chroniclers who immediately succeeded them, who have presented a wonderful picture of the work of their monastic brethren, regarding them as saints worth worshipping; that things were not as such writers tell us, documents found in the archives in later times, as well as a dispassionate criticism of the chronicles written by the friars, show us. We know that during, and many years after the conquest, they knew only superficially the language and the psychology of the Indians; that they contented themselves with teaching them certain prayers, in Latin very often, which they automatically, without

understanding them, repeated, and the ceremonies of the cult without explaining their meaning; and once they learned this they were regarded as converts to catholicism. Nor was this the only mistake they made, but using what theologians call 'dolus bonus' they invented apparitions of heavenly beings, such as the Virgin of Pueblito, the Christ of Chalma, etc. And they did also seek substitutes for the idols among the saints of the Catholic calendar to be worshipped by the Indians".¹

Confirming the quotation of this Mexican historian, we must note here the first miracle of the conquest. It is said to have occurred on March 22, 1519, when Cortes landed on the estuary of the Grijalva River, where he fought a victorious battle with the natives. The historian Gomara² tells us that on this occasion, when the battle was at its fiercest point and the Indians seemed to be the victors, St. Peter and St. James appeared to aid the Spanish. But ingenuous Bernal Diaz del Castillo says, "but I, sinner as I am, was not worthy to be permitted to see it. What I did see was, Francisco de Morla riding in company with Cortes and the rest upon a chestnut horse".³

Cortes knew the appalling effect upon the natives caused by a man riding a horse, a creature unknown to them; but he was in a position to foment in his troubled soldiers

1. Toro, A., IEM, p. 8

2. Gomara, F., HCHC, Vol. I, pp. 31-33

3. Diaz del Castillo, B., THCM, p. 47 ff.

the idea of the miracle, giving credit for it to St. Peter and St. James; crafts like this were of great value for him, in order to keep up the morale of his soldiers who already were giving signs of desertion on account of the dangers which then began to appear.

Diego do Landa during his episcopal visitation made to Tabasco in 1575, says that in that religion there were so many Indian sorcerers and witches, that he was able to escape from them only by the intervention of an angel who helped him to cross a bridge. Of interest is also the narrative of Maria Teresa de la Trinidad, written in 1816, in which it is asserted that Jesus Christ came to speak to her every Friday, and as testimony of this a letter signed by the angels was exhibited, and in order to give it authenticity it was sealed by the Archbishop of Guatemala, Ramon Casasus y Torres.¹ This event, which was widely exploited by the clergy, called for the intervention of other higher ecclesiastical authorities, because of the evil way in which the hysteria of an unfortunate woman was used, a case which modern experimental psychology defines with absolute certainty.

We can affirm with modern sociologists, that the native groups of the country were and still are idol worshippers. The Indian replaced his own religion with another which he did not understand; fear led him to conversion, and it is strange to observe how during the

1. Portes Gil, E., LPCC, p. 120.

conquest he buried his idols under the altar with a cross, thus deceiving the missionaries who shortly later boasted of the fact of the miraculous conversion of millions of Indians.¹ In the foundations of many churches in the country have been found traces of the "teocallis", or Indian temples, as in the heart of the supposed catholicism of the Indian we can find his ancient pagan beliefs.

A catholic writer affirms that the liberals of our time are jealous because of the conversion and adherence of the masses of our people to the Catholic religion, therefore they have made the charge that the Indians are idolaters. We appeal to the practical sense and to the experience of the Mexicans. The Indians, not only the lowest but the race at large, when it is explained to them, have sufficient capability to distinguish between the matter out of which the image is made and what it represents. When we explain this notion to our children five or six years old, they understand it at once and without any difficulty".² But the writer forgets the fact that between a non-Indian and an Indian child there is a great difference. Fundamentally, the native groups of the country had their pre-conceived ideas about religion; theirs was not a conscience devoid of any religious idea; on the contrary, it was a mind with a religious system transmitted by tradition or custom. Only a very profound

1. Brenner. A., IBA, p. 138

2. Quoted by Toro, A., IEM, p. 20

culture can eradicate the preconceptions, religious or otherwise, of a man. We have an example in the almost exceptional type of the Mexican fanatic in the service of the immoralities of the catholic clergy.¹

The reason for this is found in the fact that the Spanish conquest was a conquest strictly superficial. Neither the conqueror nor the missionary reached the soul of the people; they did not have enough material or spiritual power to assimilate the Indian; rather they always practiced a policy of alienation. They maltreated the Indian, enslaved him, and fomented racial hatred. The fusion of the two races was not directed to a noble aim, but rather produced a race which inherited the congenital vices of both. The "mestizo", a combination of Spanish and Indian, hates the white and exploits the Indian; the Indian hates both. "Underlying Mexican history, is a conflict between two races with sharply divergent cultures".²

Sahagun points out: "They (the first twelve missionaries) did not forget the commandment given by the Redeemer to his disciples: 'estote prudentes sicut serpentes et simplices sicut columbae'; and although observing literally the second, they nevertheless neglected the first, and even the heathen discovered that they lacked the serpentine prudence, and so with deceitful humility very soon they promised to accept the faith preached to

1. Cf. Beals, C., MM, pp. 306 ff.

2. Tannenbaum, F., PBR, p. 5; 13-23.

them, only superficially, for they did not detest or renounce all their gods with all their culture, and so they were baptized, not as perfect believers as they pretended to be but as feigning believers who received that faith without abandoning the false one which they had of many gods. This palliation was not understood at first, and this was the cause of the opinion that the said preachers held in regard to their perfect faith, and so they told all the ministers of the Gospel who came after them to preach to this people. The first of them were the Dominicans, who were followed by twenty Franciscans (among whom I came); we all were told that this people had embraced the faith so really, and nearly all were baptized and learned in the catholic faith of the Roman Church, that there was no need to preach against idolatry, because they really had abandoned it. We regarded this information as true and miraculous, because in such a brief time, and with very little preaching, and without any miracle, such a multitude of people had been converted and had come to the flock of the church; and so, we left behind us the sharp weapons which we had to fight idolatry, and instead we began to preach moral things about the articles of faith and the seven sacraments of the church. But a few years later we found out the lack of serpentine prudence on the part of the founders of this new church, for they did not know the conspiracy of the

chiefs to receive Jesus Christ among their gods as one of them, in accordance with an ancient custom they had, that when some foreign people came to settle near the places already populated, when they deemed it a good thing, they accepted as god the god of the newly-come until they had, after some time, a great host of gods. In this wise they took as a god without difficulty the God of the Spanish, but did not abandon their old ones, and this they did not reveal; and at the time of their baptism when they were asked whether they believed in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, together with the rest of the articles of faith, they answered yes, according to their customs; and when they were asked if they renounced the old gods which they had worshipped, falsely and lying they answered yes. And thus this new church was founded without due security".
 1

In another place Sahagun describes the heathen practices used in his time, and referring to the religious festivals of the Indians, he says: "And furthermore there is another difficulty because of the custom of these natives to celebrate the feasts of their idols with dance and noise and merriment, and they obviously believe that in this consists the sanctification
 2
 of the feasts".

1. Sahagun, B., HGCNE, in the Preface.
 2. Ibid. pp. 84 ff.

It would be proper to repeat these words today, when one observes the religious feasts in which one can without difficulty discover their typically heathen origin.

No one can deny that the most superb monuments in the country are churches and cathedrals; their architecture and massiveness are wonderful; but we must note with Dr. Gerardo Murillo that "to the ostentatious acts of public life and to the waste of gold was added the enslavement of thousands and thousands of Indians forced to build churches and convents under government pressure and religious terror. The Indian was invariably the executor of the works of architecture and in many cases the designer. Most of the time he was not paid; he was deceived with the heavenly life or compelled by force to work. The fields were kept uncultivated and industry undeveloped; if part of the energy spent in the construction of churches had been placed in the service of other works; if the fields had been cultivated, if highways and bridges had been built, if industry had been organized and the people had been taught how to work in order to obtain a real and immediate economic result, Mexico might have founded on solid ground its economic organization".¹

On the other hand it is difficult to believe

1. Murillo, G., IM, Vol. III, p. 7.

that the social organization of the colonial period modified Indian psychology. The Aztec "tecuhtli" were replaced by the Spanish "encomenderos";¹ their priests by the catholic clergy; their idols of stone by saint images; their "tlacatecuhtli" by the viceroy; their "cihuacoatl" by the archbishop or the pope. The Indian people continued being servants, and their territorial property continued in enormous proportion in the hands of the clergy. The social organization continued being semi-feudal; the conqueror, the priest, and the land-holder kept the Indians in a state of servitude. The church was an institution whose purpose was to exploit everybody. The life of the individual centered round the church; from his cradle to the grave, even his simplest actions fell under the judgement of the church.²

Everything was religious. Until very recently our painting was religious; churches are found even in the smallest ranch; the Indian blindly obeys the dictates, not always honest, of the local priest; the Church has been powerful and rich, and it claims three fourths of the population. Yet a large majority of the population, formed by "mestizos" and Indians, is not Catholic at heart. The Indian still worships his old idols and holds his old religious practices (with the exception of human sacrifice). To him the saint is a fetish, an

1. See above, p. 12.

2. See Brenner, A., IBA, pp. 129-157

idol, and the moral mechanism of religion is simply to make propitiatory and magical offerings to God. Furthermore, it is curious to observe that in the saints in thousands of niches, the rude conception of the idol is noted. The features, the attitude, everything in the sculpture, reflect the ancient heathen indigenous religion. The Indian has not understood the true heart of the Christian doctrine; not because he cannot grasp the high philosophy or the splendid ethics of Christianity, which are difficult even for the best European catholics; but because the propaganda made by the Spanish was one of terror, which is the method used by the pagans to propagate their own religion. The Spanish conquest was too violent, too slow, too interested in everything except the heart of the people. Stage, name, actors, everything has been changed, but at the bottom things are the same: the Indian professes his own religion, and if he has suppressed some immoral practices as human sacrifice, it is because the social and political forces have compelled him to do so. In short, the Indian belongs to what Carlton Beals calls a Mexican-Aztec-Roman Church.

Can the clergy of Mexico regret the fact that the epoch of power, of luxury, of moral disorder and of free waste has gone forever? "In the XVII century Mexico City was without doubt one of the most opulent

cities in the world; the wealth of the higher class was, for that time, relatively great, above all for the cash in existence, silver bars, and furniture and vessels owned by the rich. Tradition notes as common the fact that rich men used to make with silver bars a pathway from their house to the church, or at least from the main door to the bedroom, upon which those who participated in the baptism of their children walked. All the well-to-do families used at the table silver vessels, silver furniture was common, and an enormous number of candelabra, lamps, chairs, and other objects of the same metal devoted to the cult existed in the churches. Viceroy and Archbishops set the example of merriment and grandeur in their palaces. Their political festivities, and in them the processions, dedications, and other solemn acts; the arrival of Viceroy and Archbishops, the rites and ceremonies of private life, such as baptisms, weddings, and burials of the members of the higher classes---
 everything was sumptuous, splendid".
¹

With a description like this, we may ask with Portes Gil, "Who can deny the insulting luxury which surrounded the Church? Certainly not the same priests who have taken vows of humility and poverty. They alone cannot, will not, see the tremendous contrast

1. Francisco Diez Barroso; quoted by Murillo, G., in IM., Vol. III, pp. 6-7

also requested him to ask the bishops to reduce the number of ordinations, because there were already in Mexico City, Puebla, Michoacan, Oaxaca, Guadalajara, and Chiapas over six thousand unemployed clergy. And finally they asked that the excessive number of holy days be reduced, for they only brought idleness and other disorders.¹

One of the most opprobrious ecclesiastical tribunals ever established in Mexico under the Spanish domination was the Tribunal of the Inquisition, independent of the ecclesiastical and civil authorities, but with equal competence to resolve all problems regarding the faith and other things pertaining to it. Its establishment in the XVI century manifested fully the degeneration and corruption of the Mexican clergy, and presented the inquisitory friars as the most hypocritical and hateful executioners registered by the history of the Church in Mexico. Most of the Catholic writers have vainly attempted to justify the acts of that tribunal; history so reveals its innoble work, its iniquitous and anti-social activities, that the bitterest condemnation seems insufficient for that institution which was both for the Church and for the Kings of Spain a dreadful political weapon: it was an instrument to keep foreigners and Protestants out of the country, and to consolidate and reassert the economic and political hegemony of the Roman Church.

1. Gonzalez Davila, G., TEPIIO, Vol. I, pp. 16-17; see also Curtis, A. W., CHA, pp. 224-231.

between the opulence of the Church and the miserable condition of the people to which it is supposed to minister".¹

The report of Pedro de Moya y Contreras, Archbishop of Mexico, sending King Philip II personal information of the clergy of his diocese,² as well as the report to the King by the cathedral chapter of Guadalajara about the affairs of that place,³ and Mendieta's description,⁴ fully reveal the rapid decay of the Mexican Church. Gil Gonzalez Davila asserts that the ecclesiastical element continued increasing in number, the convents being multiplied, storing under their wings a considerable fortune. In the time of Archbishop Perez de la Serna alone, a period of eleven years, were founded in Mexico City and its surroundings fifteen convents, monasteries, and churches, spending in building and endowments the sum of 2,227,000 ducats. A few years later, in 1644, the Ayuntamiento (town council) of Mexico City made a request to Philip IV asking him to forbid the founding of more monasteries and convents, which existed already in excess; to limit the number of great estates belonging to the monks, and to forbid them to make further acquisitions; for, they said, "If they are not stopped they will shortly become owners of everything". They

1. Portes Gil, E., LPCC, p. 25; see also Beals, C., Mexico, pp. 166 ff.

2. CI, p. 195

3. Garcia Icazbalceta, J., CDHM, Vol. II, pp. 484 ff.

4. Mendieta, G., HEI, bk. IV, c. XLVI.

Scientific progress was made impossible in New Spain, because books coming to this country from the outside were subject to the strictest censorship, their circulation forbidden, their fraudulent introduction harshly punished, and any trace of free speech when it became openly manifest stopped. This Tribunal had its headquarters in Mexico City, and was formed by two inquisitors and one Attorney General, with commissioners and delegates in the main cities whose task was to investigate and report the suspicious activities of those who became their victims.

"What a difference this was between the fatherly and great character of the first friars and missionaries and that of the hateful friars of the Inquisition! The same God of love whom the virtuous friars invoked to bring up the Indian souls in the Christian religion, was also invoked by the inquisitorial friars to mystify and conceal their crimes and their cruelty. The Tribunal of the Inquisition inquired and punished the acts and delinquencies generally considered as heretical. Its activities were carried on on the basis of a secrecy as absolute as confession itself, with regard both to the denouncer and to the imputed facts. That absurd and hateful system of investigation made of the process a true and proper general inquisition in which any possibility of innocence or defence was out of the question. In order to open the

process a simple act arousing suspicion or an anonymous denunciation was sufficient. The investigation was always followed by the most painful and brutal tortures which were applied to the defendant in order to make him confess. All this was carried on in the midst of an imposing ceremony of hypocritical piety which made the crime more theatrical and repugnant. The acts of the Tribunal were executed in the main Square of Mexico City surrounded by a pompous solemnity which was intended to produce great panic and terror. All this sinister picture, so many times cursed by the victims, contributed to consolidate the enormous clerical power. The same place in which the Indians used to offer their bestial human sacrifices to their gods, was centuries later used, in the name of a higher civilization, to commit the same sacerdotal crimes of the new religion which turned down the Aztec idols. Boundless rigor, inexorable severity, was displayed by the Tribunal of the Inquisition, and under its hands fell and were choked all desires, and all the efforts of the human intellect.

The opinions, the philosophical, political, economic, and scientific schools of all kinds which, in the judgment of those tyrant friars, were regarded contrary to the doctrines on which their claims rested, or which questioned their undue domination on the conscience of the people, were declared heretical and terrible punished.

This Tribunal was also a political instrument; with their intervention its judges pretended to suppress the various political and social movements which took place in the Colony, including the War of Independence. Excommunications, punishments of all sorts, were not sufficient, and from the glorious remains of Hidalgo and Morelos arose the new nation, condemned to grow and to live at the expense of numberless struggles and enormous sacrifices. Another of the public functions which gave more strength to the clerical domination was the ecclesiastical censorship exerted on publicity. The clergy were the supreme judge which determined what books, what theories and what publications could reach the hands of the people. Is it possible to conceive of a greater domination or a more detestable despotism over the human conscience and spirit, than this hateful tyranny?".¹

In view of this no one can wonder at the enormous political and economic power accumulated by the Catholic clergy during those years of the national life, a power exerted in the midst of all conceivable vices and of all the immense ambitions to increase their interests.

During the XVIII century Viceroy Croix ordered the expulsion of the Jesuits and the confiscation of their property; their deportation had been ordered before by the Spanish Kings, and it is proper to remember the unrest

1. Trejo, C. L. de T., LRN, p. 56 ff.

it caused in Spain as well as in the Colony; their political activities and their accumulation of wealth could not pass unnoticed by the Spanish rulers.¹ Thus Ferdinand VI, in view of the disorder brought about by "admission of an increasing number of individuals into the religious orders to the discredit and contempt of their holy institutions", commanded in July 20, 1754, with the approval of the Holy See, that for a period of ten years no individual should be admitted into the religious orders under any pretext. Likewise he forbade the admission into such orders of men under twenty-one years of age, because of "the continuous abuses of many individuals of the religious orders and the increasing number of apostates".²

But it was not until the reign of Charles III, when the reforming purposes of the Bourbon dynasty became more apparent, and in view of their political activities and their increasing tendency to accumulate lands which were never cultivated, that the Society of Jesus was expelled from Spain in 1763, and from New Spain in 1767.³

Charles III, anxious to modernize Spain, where there were nearly 200,000 ecclesiastics, provided himself with ministers saturated in the doctrines of the French philosophers of the XVIII century who, being aware of the omnipotence of the Catholic Church in Spain, attempted to

1. Cf. Wilgus, A. C., CHA, p. 235; and Parkes, H. B., AHM, p. 137.

2. Toro, A., IEM, p. 38.

3. Cf. Parkes, H. B., p. 137; Leon, N., CHGM, p. 283 ff.

subject it to the State by limiting the power of the Inquisition and suppressing the ecclesiastical courts; these reforms met with stiff opposition principally from the Jesuits who had succeeded in entering into all the Spanish dominions, accumulating everywhere, especially in Mexico and Paraguay, a large amount of wealth and power to such an extent that they constituted an "imperium in imperio". The Jesuits controlled education, predominantly theological and scholastic in character, and although, as Roman Catholic writers argue, it is true that through this supervision of education the Church transmitted European culture and civilization into America, it still is true that such education was confined to the aristocracy alone, and that they used it as a means of propagating their own political and economic doctrines. For these reasons, Charles III was compelled to expel the Society of Jesus from his dominions, confiscating their possessions on behalf of the Crown, with certain joy on the part of the secular clergy because of the antagonism which existed, as we have pointed out, between those two clerical orders in the Colony.¹

The Spanish Kings had in Mexico the ecclesiastical patronage. We saw at the beginning of this chapter that the Crown had secured from the Pope title to the lands of the new world. But this deed did not prevent

1. See Toro, A., IEM, p. 38; Curtis, A. W., CHA, p. 235.

the Spanish monarch from exacting from Pope Alexander VI in May, 1493, and Julius II in July, 1508, Bulls that practically placed the Church under the dominion of the Crown; "The Crown had almost exclusive power in the establishment and organization of the Mexican Church".¹ These rights, going under the general name of "patronato", delegated very extensive prerogatives to the Crown. It is difficult to determine the nature and inclusiveness of such prerogatives, but it is well known that they were used to carry out the reformation of the clergy which had reached their lowest point in Spain as well as in Mexico. The patronage was closely related to the ecclesiastical constitution of Mexico, and its rights included the appointment of all church officers, from bishops to sacristans, even without the confirmation of the Pope. "Already since June 17, 1717 and before the reign of Charles III, a Concordat had been sealed between Rome and Spain, whereby the Spanish Crown was granted indefinitely the patronage over all its dominions; that is to say, rights, privileges, and preferences in virtue of which the King appointed bishops, provided ecclesiastical benefices, and enjoyed other lucrative privileges over the ecclesiastical revenues. It was, then, Charles III who was responsible for the more advanced measures, as the expulsion of the Jesuits, the reformation of the Tribunal

1. Leon, N., CHGM, p. 238

of the Inquisition, the reduction of the number of churches which enjoyed the right of sanctuary, the founding of economic societies, the limitation of the powers of the courts of the Inquisition to forbid the impression and circulation of books; the declaration that the Bull 'Caena Domini', against the royal rights, had not been accepted in Spain and that it would be blotted out of the church books; the repeated statements that no Bull could be published in the Kingdom without royal authorization; reforms and enactments all inspired by Charles III's Ministers, Rodriguez de Campomanes and Jose Monino, and by learned jurists who with their fiscal dictates combated the advances of the Church's power."¹

By the end of the XVI century the wealth accumulated by the Church was considerable. There were in Mexico over four hundred convents and monasteries for the use of about eight hundred religious orders and communities; each monastery had under its jurisdiction several churches in towns and villages, the number of which can only deduced from the fact that over one thousand were under the province of Mexico (Mexico City and suburbs) alone. When the Jesuits were driven out of Mexico, an inventory made of their possessions revealed that, in addition to their churches and convents, their schools and urban real estate, they owned 123 vast farms (haciendas).

1. Pallares, J., LFCDCM, p. 58; cf. also Padilla, E., ETR, p. 224

As was to be expected, considering the wealth of the Church, some of the prelates commanded princely incomes. According to Humboldt¹ the Archbishop of Mexico received annually 123,000 pesos, the Archbishop of Puebla 110,000, the Archbishop of Valladolid 100,000, the Archbishop of Guadalajara 90,000, and so on down to the Bishop of Sonora who received 6,000. A conservative Mexican historian, Lucas Alaman, a good catholic, and the intellectual leaders of the Church party in his days, estimated that at the end of the Colonial period, "not less than half of the real property and capital of the country belonged to the Church. Most of the remainder was controlled by the Church through mortgages. The Church was the landlora, the banker, and the trustee² of the period".

From the start of the conquest, the Kings of Spain, through the Bull 'Inter Caetera' secured for the Crown the absolute ownership of the tithes. They had been used for the care of churches, to cover the expenses of religious worship, to pay the clergy, etc. But Charles V in February 5, 1541 ordered that the product of the tithes should be divided into four parts of which one was to be applied to the episcopate, and another to the cathedral chapter; the other two were divided into nine parts, two for the Royal Treasury,

1. Quoted by Portes Gil, E., LPCC, p. 33.

2. Alaman, L., HM, Vol. I, p. 67.

three for the upkeep of churches, and the remaining four-ninths were to be used for the salaries of the curates and as the articles of erection specified. The cathedral chapter, from the 25% allotted to it, was responsible for the salaries of its own members such as dignitaries, canons, and prebendaries.¹

The administrative machinery for the tithes was complicated and overlapping. The collecting and spending of the two-ninths belonged to the Treasury Officials of the colonial government. If the tithes proved insufficient for the needs of a diocese, the clerical hierarchy paid for the royal assistance by handing over the entire control of this source of income. In the XVII and the XVIII centuries the Crown incorporated into the civil law the claim to control the revenues of a vacant ecclesiastical office, and according to this ordinance such funds might be used as any other money of the State. Even in those dioceses where the prelates were granted the rights to manage the tithes, the Crown insisted upon choosing subordinate officials who had immediate supervision over the tax collectors.²

Dr. Mora has exposed the serious problem presented by the accumulation of landed property and mortgages which greatly alarmed the Spanish Kings who

1. RLRI, Bk. i, tit. XVI, laws 18 and 23.
2. RLRI, Bk. i, tit. XVI, laws 21-23.

sought to check it by means of the strictest laws, such as Law 10, title XII, Book iv, of the "Recopilacion de leyes", whereby the Church was forbidden to buy real property.¹

This and most of the laws of the same character were but the defence of the political power of the Crown--the necessity of counter-checking the organization of societies of spiritual nature but eager for riches, the forming of an organization endowed with extraordinary powers which was a constant menace against the political power. This phenomenon is the one which the Reformation in Mexico fought against, and is the same that is being eradicated by the Mexican Revolution which, in its program of reconstruction, cannot permit the existence of a power which is a hindrance to the development of the national economy and all efforts for progress and social improvement.

Sad days were those when it was necessary to combat the wickedness, immorality, ignorance, and avarice of the rulers of the Colony and of the Church which had all the characteristics of an institution singularly commercial. All that brought as a consequence the moral and economic bankruptcy of our country and the heavy and grievous heritage delegated to us as an independent nation. If these evils settled themselves down in a

1. See Mora, J. M. L., OB, p. 70.

definite epoch of our history, it is the duty of our political and religious leaders to stamp them out. This is what the Mexican Revolution is doing, and if Mexican Christianity remains indifferent, or if it is going to continue being a hindrance to the fulfillment of this task, it certainly deserves the same fate the Church in Russia had.

CHAPTER III

THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERTY

III. THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERTY.

A clear conception of a Mexican fatherland, based on experience acquired over centuries, together with the determining necessity of constituting a political organization, was the essential cause of Mexican Independence, a phenomenon that took place by reason of the mere march of events, with the enthusiasm of the dispossessed masses, and against the higher Catholic Clergy, which were not only antagonistic to, but a bitter enemy of the insurgent hosts.

The economic and social inequality fostered by the State and religion, had divided the people into classes from the beginning of the conquest. Nearly all the legislation enacted had as its fundamental idea the rule and domination of the natives, submission to the political power and control by the Church. The predominance of the clergy and of the Church is one of the most characteristic features of the Colony. The influence of the clergy was very great because it was based on respect for religion, on the recollection of alleged benefits constantly proclaimed, and on its vast wealth.

When the movement for independence began, the clergy split; on the one hand were the higher and wealthier clergy, who enjoyed the profits and the most lucrative benefits in the large towns and administered the great properties of the regular monastic institutions; they

always declared themselves against Independence; on the other hand, there were the lower Clergy, the village priests, those of the countryside and of the mountains, the friars of certain humble monasteries; they favored the movement for Independence; in fact, the first and most celebrated leaders came from these poor Clergy who had been in close contact with the misery of the people.

No one could deny that yearning for something, that unconscious need of some change in the social structure which reflected itself in the middle classes, in the village priests and in the lower ranks of army officers. The perverted interpretation of the Gospel had ground down the various classes of society. The ideas of Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Rousseau crossed the Pyrenees and were concealed as forbidden books in the cassocks of the priests. The colonial organization, full of stains and defects, was beginning to crumble. "The plague of the Church was the cancer that gnawed at that organization; everything was impregnated by religious ideas, the teaching imparted was full of ignorance and inhibitions. Indian peoples were bound in the chains of prejudice".¹ Independence alone could give rise to the establishment of a new organization and open the way to the new ideas of the century. The expulsion of the Jesuits made manifest vices existing in and admitted by the Church itself; by the humiliating events at Bayonne the people realized the falsity of the divine right of kings; the French Revolution was a

1. Portes Gil, E., LPCC, p. 42.

vibrating clarion blast that reechoed in the continents making ready for freedom; the independence of the United States with its constitutional provisions; the imprisonment of Iturriigaray; the French invasion of Spain.

On the fall of Ferdinand VII, the separation of New Spain began, and for the first time the words "popular sovereignty" were uttered with a new and courageous meaning. Verdad and Talamantes offered up their lives in the interest of liberty. Then came the fall of Iturriigaray and the imposition of Garibay; Venegas, Calleja, and Apodaca, Lieutenant-Generals, undertook a hopeless attempt to bolster up the tottering edifice of the Colony, until O'Donoju came along to collect the debris. In all these events the Clergy participated in various immoral ways; by declaring the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people heretical and anathematizing it, or imposing on them the decrepit Garibay, or the sinister Archbishop, Francisco Javier de Lizama.

Miguel Hidalgo's work was truly splendid. In his hosts enlisted the creole priest desirous of improvement of his lot, and the patriotic and resolute countryman, inspired by his exemplary mission.

"I find myself in the regrettable necessity", he said in his Manifesto, "of satisfying people on a point which I had never thought possible could be brought up against me, and far less brand me as suspicious to my fellow-countrymen. I speak of that which to me is above

everything, most sacred and most loved by me; of our holy religion, of that supernatural faith bestowed on me in baptism....."

"The origin of all my offences is to be sought in my desire for your happiness; if this had not compelled me to take up arms, I would be enjoying a calm, pleasant and tranquil existence; I would be regarded a true Catholic, which I am and glad to be; there would never have been anyone so bold as to slander me by the infamous accusation of heresy..."

"The oppressors have no men nor arms enough to compel me by force to continue in that horrible slavery to which they had condemned us, as what resources had they left? To resort to all manner of means, however unjust, unlawful and stupid they might be, provided they conduced to maintain their despotism and the oppression of America; they have dropped even the last trace of honesty and probity; the worthiest authorities are prostituted, and they launch forth excommunications which none better than they know have no force at all; they attempt to intimidate the unwary and to terrorize the ignorant, so that the latter may, terrified by the word anathema, feel fear where there are no grounds for such fear....."

"Who could believe, beloved fellow-citizens, that the boldness and effrontery of the Spanish could reach such lengths? To desecrate the holiest things in

order to assure their intolerable domination? To avail themselves of our holy religion itself to drag it down and destroy it? To resort to excommunications contrary to the intention of the Church, to launch them on no religious grounds whatever?....."

"Open your eyes, Americans; do not allow our enemies to win you over; they are not Catholics except from policy; their God is Mammon and the sole purpose of their threats is oppression; think ye perchance that no one can be a true Catholic unless subject to the Spanish despot? Whence has this new dogma, this new article of ¹ faith come to us?". Not in vain did the opprobrious tyranny of three centuries crush down the soul of the people.

The noble adventure of Hidalgo came to an end in Acatita de Bajan when he was made a prisoner in 1811, but the seed had been sown and it was impossible to check the revolution. Rayon, Liceaga, Verduzco, Morelos, Guerrero---all these men are but a few pages of the effort of a people to liberate itself. "The land of peace became a land of blood. Step by step for the next ten years the "gachupines" were driven from stronghold to stronghold, until finally only the prison fortress of San Juan de Ulua in the harbour of Veracruz remained to them". Then the figure of Iturbide appeared on the stage as the redemption of the people and of the conservative party. O'Donoju

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1. Extracts from Hidalgo's Manifesto proclaimed when he was excommunicated a week after the war of Independence began.--In Garcia Icazbalceta, J., CDHM, p. 236 ff.
 2. Chase, S., Mexico, p. 112.

signed in Cordoba, Veracruz, the pact named after that place, and in September 27, 1821, the liberating army entered victorious into Mexico City.

The Church had not been inactive during this time. Hidalgo was charged with sedition, schism, heresy; both archbishops and bishops declared him excommunicated, and the royalist party found support in the church pulpits. The decree of the Bishop of Michoacan, Manual Abad y Queipo, dated September 24, 1810, contained such expressions as the following:

"A minister of the God of peace, a priest of Jesus Christ and a shepherd of souls, the Curate of Dolores, Miguel Hidalgo (who had until now deserved my confidence and friendship) in the company of the Captains of the Queen's Regiment, Ignacio Allende, Juan de Aldama, and Jose Maria Abasolo, has raised the standard of rebellion and lighted the torch of discord and anarchy, and by winning over a band of ignorant countryfolk, has made them resort to arms and falling with them on the village of Dolores, on the 16th instant at dawn, surprised and arrested the European residents, and looted and robbed their property; and after that at seven o'clock they proceeded to San Miguel el Grande, where they did the same, having in both places seized the reins of authority and of government"; further on he adds: "that being so and exercising the authority vested on me as Bishop elect and Governor of this Bishopric, I declare that the aforesaid Miguel Hidalgo, the Curate of Dolores, and his

followers, the three captains aforesaid, are sacrilegious, perjured and have become liable to major excommunication of the canon; si quis suadente diabolo, for that he has made an attempt on the person and liberty of the sexton of Dolores, of the Curate of Chamacuero and of several religious of the Carmelite Monastery at Celaya, by seizing them and holding them under arrest. I declare them to be excommunicated persons who must be shunned, and forbid as I do, that any one give them succour, aid or comfort, under pain of major excommunication ipso facto incurrenda, this edict to serve as an admonition, which I declare any infringers shall henceforward become liable to. I further exhort and call upon that portion of the people whom he had led astray, by bestowing on them the title of soldiers and companions in arms, to return to their homes and to abandon him within the third day following that on which this edict shall come to their notice, under the same penalty of major excommunication, in which I from now on declare they shall fall, and all those who shall voluntarily enlist under his flag or in any way afford him aid and comfort.¹"

On October 11, 1810, the Archbishop of Mexico, Francisco de Lizama y Beaumont, issued an edict declaring the excommunication decreed by the Bishop of Michoacan valid and lawful; on October 13, 1810, the friars of the Apostolic College at Pachuca wrote a letter to the Viceroy proposing to send monks from the community to persuade the

1. Icazbalceta, J., CDHM, p. 253.

villagers that they ought not to embrace the cause of Independence; on October 27, 1810, in the city of Puebla the clergy announced its allegiance to the cause of the King in a memorable document; and lastly, on March 28, 1811, the Metropolitan Cathedral Chapter of Mexico exhorted the clergy of its diocese to continue loyal to the cause of the King. The attitudes and activities of the Higher Clergy, loyal to the royal government, made manifest the defects of that organization. They did not hesitate to use drastic methods against men of such nobility of character as Hidalgo, against whom proceedings were employed in violation of all ecclesiastical rights. The manner in which he and others were executed and all the circumstances attendant upon the proceedings from the time of his arrest reveal the degrading servilism of the clergy of that time.¹

The Church was from the outset pro-royalist; how, then, can one reconcile this with the fact that the Church brought the Revolution to its final consummation? In order to give a full explanation of this anomaly we need to examine the political events that were taking place in Spain and behind the battle-lines in Mexico.

In 1807, when Napoleon was trying to fight England by excluding it from the markets of Europe, he found himself unable to enforce successfully his so-called "continental policy" because Portugal, a loyal friend of England, refused to close its ports to trade with that country. Therefore, the dictator of Europe determined to

1. Cf. Toro, A., IEM, p. 58-63.

compel Portugal to obey his orders and to shut England out. In order to Attack Portugal, he had to lead his armies across Spain; having by the treaty of Fontainebleau received from King Charles IV permission to do this, Napoleon, with his soldiers already on Spanish soil, treacherously took advantage of the weakness of King Charles, the dishonesty and intrigue of the minister Godoy, and the selfishness of the heir apparent, Ferdinand.¹

During a quarrel between the royal father and son, egged on by Godoy, Charles was forced to renounce his crown in favor of Ferdinand, who succeeded to the throne as Ferdinand VII, although later Charles regretted his hasty act and withdrew his abdication. Promising to settle this quarrel to the satisfaction of all, Napoleon persuaded both to meet him at Bayonne. As soon, however, as they had crossed the border into French territory they were seized and made prisoners. It was an easy matter then for Napoleon to compel the weak old King to abdicate his throne and to grant to the French emperor the right to name his successor, after Ferdinand had also been compelled to renounce his rights. In due season Napoleon appointed his brother, Joseph, as King of Spain and the Indies and sent instructions to royal officials in the colonies to obey his orders. The people of Spain, however, did not accept the deposition of their king, Ferdinand, and the whole nation rose in arms against the new King Joseph, guerrilla bands attacked the French troops, and aid was

1. See Wilgus, A. C., HHA, p. 220.

asked from England; this country sent an army under Wellesley to aid its new allies in driving Napoleon out of Spain and Portugal in the Penninsular War which resulted disastrously for Napoleon and Joseph.¹

The Spanish people not only refused to accept Joseph as their King and to obey his constitutions and laws, but they set up local "juntas" (governing councils) in various parts of Spain to carry on their own government in the name of Ferdinand VII. Among these "juntas" that in Seville took the lead and assumed jurisdiction for the whole of Spain, sending emissaries to the colonies to assert its authority there and to invite the colonists to send duputies to Spain. The Spanish colonists, like the people in Spain, refused to accept the king whom Napoleon had imposed upon them. They were loyal to the house of Bourbon and at first had no desire to detach themselves from the Spanish monarchy, but they were unwilling to admit the authority of the Spanish people, and declined to accept orders from the "Junta" of Sevilla. If each province in Spain might govern itself by means of a local "junta", there seemed no reason why each province in the colonies should not do likewise. Compromise was the proper procedure to meet the obstinacy of the American Spaniards. In 1812 the Spanish "Junta" organized the election of the "Cortes", formed mainly by representatives from the colonies. The officers in the "juntas", as Spaniards, wished to maintain Spanish domination over

1. Leon, N., CHGM, p. 316.

the colonies; but liberalism had by this time swept all over Spain, and as liberals they were compelled to agree that the colonists had rights. The "cortes" were organized as the means of government of the colonies with due respect for their rights; they were to cooperate with the "juntas" in Spain to the extent of preserving intact his realm for their exiled and imprisoned King Ferdinand, but they would not take orders from "juntas" which were no more legitimate than their own.¹

In 1812 the "Cortes" produced a constitution, according to which there were to be elective town councils and provincial assemblies; the Inquisition and the other special religious and military courts were to be abolished, the church lands were to be secularized, and the press was to be free. Since the French still held most of Spain, the constitution could hardly be applied there, but Viceroy Venegas, who derived his authority from the Cortes, was ordered to put it into force on September 28, in Mexico. When the elections prescribed by the constitution were held, the winning candidates were uniformly creoles who were in favor of the independence of the country; this, added to the constant anti-Spanish manifestations that followed the elections angered Venegas who consequently declared the constitution suspended until the end of the war. This decision was approved by the Spanish Cortes, in spite of the protests of Ramos

1. See Wilgus, C. A., CHA, pp. 413 ff.

Arizpe, the most outstanding of the Mexican representatives in such Cortes.¹

When Napoleon was overthrown in 1815, he released Ferdinand VII from his prison. The Spanish people, who for five years had been fighting to restore him to the throne of his fathers, were not, however, to enjoy him as their king. Amidst the enthusiasm caused by his return, he found it easy to destroy the constitution, restore the despotic government, and send the liberal leaders to jail. Calleja, Venegas's successor, was notified of the change and immediately informed the Mexicans that the constitution had been abolished.

In 1820 a barrack revolt followed by a revolution in Spain made a prisoner of Ferdinand VII. The constitution of 1812 was restored, and Ferdinand saved his crown by swearing to obey it. The popular and liberal Cortes were restored, and the King was compelled to enforce all the provisions of the constitution, including freedom of the press, the abolition of clerical and military privileges, and the confiscation of the church's properties. The Cortes ordered Apodaca, who had succeeded Calleja in the Viceroyalty, to put these provisions into effect in New Spain, but the Viceroy, being a loyal supporter of the King, resolved to resist the commands of the Cortes and for this purpose hastened to assemble troops throughout the Colony to suppress the rebels. These events put the royalists in

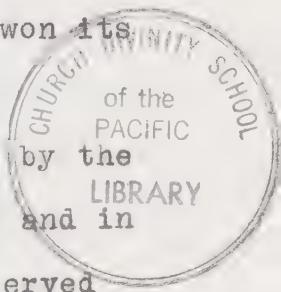
1. Parkes, H. B., AHM, 167; Leon, N., CHGM, 317.

an embarrassing position. Should they declare themselves obedient to the Cortes, or should they remain loyal to the King? The choice involved acceptance of liberal ideas which they hated, or a separation from the mother country; for if they continued their adherence to Spain, they would lose the much prized privileges of their class and would suffer the degradation of being governed by upstart bourgeoisie liberals like those who were ruling Spain. The clergy, panic-stricken for fear that the Viceroy would enforce the orders of the Cortes for the confiscation of their property and the abolition of their privileges, led the way to plot independence, and found in Iturbide the man who was to carry out their plans. Through the influence of the clergy, Apodaca gave the command of the royal troops to Iturbide who, as a part of the plot, by the close of 1820 allied himself with the insurgents fighting under Guerrero, and in Iguala the two leaders signed a pact and formed a plan of Independence. The two combined armies marched then towards Mexico City, had some clashes with the scattered royalist regiments, and took possession of the larger cities of the country. Meantime Apodaca had been recalled, and in his place the Cortes sent O'Donoju; Iturbide besieged him in Veracruz until he compelled him to sign the treaty of Cordoba in August, 1821, whereby the last Spanish Viceroy recognized the independence of Mexico. A month later, after the royalist troops had

been withdrawn from the capital, Iturbide and O'Donoju entered the city together. To carry on the government, a regency of five was established of which Iturbide and the ex-Viceroy were the most influential members. Shortly afterwards a congress was assembled in which three parties became evident; the Bourbonists who favored the strict enforcement of the Plan of Iguala with Ferdinand or some other member of the House of Bourbon on the throne; the Republicans, consisting largely of those patriots who had kept the war alive since the time of Hidalgo and who now favored the organization of a federal republic; and the Iturbidists, who advocated conferring the imperial sceptre upon Iturbide. This party consisted largely of those whose personal interests depended on the success of their patron and included the clergy. However, when the Spanish Cortes refused to ratify the treaty of Cordoba or to permit Ferdinand to accept the throne of an independent Mexico, the Iturbidist party was strengthened by the reception into its ranks of many of the former Bourbonists. In the contention Iturbide was the victor, and on July 25, 1822, he was crowned Emperor at a lavish and imposing ceremony celebrated in the national cathedral. With the establishment of the First Empire the Church had won its greatest victory.

Such a direct and efficient part played by the Church in the formulation of the "Plan de Iguala" and in the final consummation of Mexico's independence served

1. Cf. Leon N. CHGM, 318 ff.; Torrente M., HIM, 272-340; Wiigus A. C., CHA, 497-502; Parkes, H. B., AHM, pp. 166-185.



only to increase its prestige and power. In effect, on October 19, 1822, the Emperor sent a commission to interview the Archbishop of Mexico in order to make the necessary arrangements to provide the vacant church posts until the Pope decided what to do with regard to the patronage. Shortly after, addressing the Metropolitan Chapter and the Ecclesiastical Council, the Archbishop declared that by reason of the independence sworn to the Empire, the right of Patronage had ceased; that it had been granted, in the case of the Mexican Church, to the Spanish Kings by the Holy See; that in order that such Patronage might be vested in the Government of the Empire without danger of its acts being null and void, it was necessary to await a like concession from the Holy See; that in the meantime, the filling of ecclesiastical posts as heretofore practiced according to the Patronage would of right devolve in each diocese upon the respective ordinary thereof, who was to proceed in accordance with the canona; that in the canonries gained by competition (after the edicts issued by the Bishops with their chapters) the place be filled up according to law and as regards curacies, let only the Bishops fix the edicts ¹ and appoint the parish priests. The rights in former years vested in the King of Spain were thus recovered by the Mexican clergy by a stroke of boldness. No more splendid triumph could be granted to ultramontanism than thus at one stroke and under the name of right of dev-

1. Cuevas, M., HIM, Vol. V, pp. 216 ff.

olution, to remain in possession of the patronage.¹

The spirit of liberalism was clearly manifested from the first years of independence, and at least on one occasion attempts were made to organize a national church independent from the Pope. This took place in Tabasco in 1829; on February 22 the Congress of that state enacted a decree declaring the same independent from the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the bishopric of Yucatan. A bishop was appointed, and the "Iglesia Tabasquena" was organized. The Bishop of Yucatan, Dr. Meneses, issued a pastoral letter on April 15 condemning the schism and shortly after the new church died out.² At the same time the liberals, most of whom had participated in the war for independence under Hidalgo and Morelos and were influenced by Rousseau and Jefferson, had begun to organize themselves in order to work for the establishment of a republic. They were the champions of social revolution; they demanded the abolition of the Empire, the suspension of clerical and military "fueros" or privileges, and the destruction of caste distinctions; they aimed at the establishment in Mexico of a republican and democratic form of government molded after the American and French patterns, and promoted among the people the free exercise of any political, religious, or cultural doctrine.

"We can briefly sum up the situation in which the clergy and the government were placed after independence had been achieved. The independence of Mexico had

1. Portes Gil, E., LPCC, p. 47; Parkes, H. B., AHM, pp. 176-178.

2. Carrillo y Ancona, C., OY, p. 1012.

paralyzed the reformation that had already begun in Spain in church matters. Then the clergy, turning to account the very important part they had played in Mexico's independence, declared themselves entirely free of all influence of the civil power, denied the right of the Government to that Patronage that the King or Spain had enjoyed and to which the Government thought that it was entitled, as the heir to the powers over the Church vested in the Government of Spain. The clergy, whenever the civil power attempted to interfere in any way in ecclesiastical matters, faced it boldly and said: 'You are not the possessor of the rights that the King of Spain had, and so that Patronage may be vested in you, you must first of all enter into an agreement with the Holy See'. That agreement was very hard, if not impossible to obtain, inasmuch as the Pope, who was then a temporal and a spiritual sovereign at one and the same time, was not able to break away from those important and close relations that had always bound the Papacy to the Spanish Monarchy; and both Ferdinand VII and the clerical interests, openly opposed recognition of the independence of the colonies which formerly belonged to Spain, and actively intrigued so that the Pope might bring his influence, which was at that time almost decisive, to bear in order to recover lost dominion over the countries of Spanish America. The activity with which the Court of Spain undertook these negotiations ere long showed practical results; in fact, Pope Leo XII

making common cause with Ferdinand VII, issued an encyclical in which he urged the Archbishops and the Bishops of the Americas to explain to their flocks the distinguished 'qualities which characterize our well-beloved son Ferdinand, Catholic King of Spain, whose sublime and solid virtues make him prefer to the splendor of his greatness, the luster of religion and the happiness of his subjects', and exhorted them 'with the necessary zeal to set forth to the consideration of every one, the illustrious and incomparable merits of those Spaniards resident in Europe, who have shown proof of their ever constant loyalty by the sacrifice of their interests and of their lives, in behalf and defence of religion, and of lawful power'. The Government of the Republic, considering that these words of the Pope had no other purpose than to invite the Bishops to uphold the domination of the King of Spain, which was tantamount to voluntary renunciation by Mexico of that independence which she had at the cost of such painful sacrifice achieved, ordered that the document in question be made to circulate among all the civil and ecclesiastical authorities throughout the country, and instructed its diplomatic Agent in Rome to make appropriate representations to the Holy See.

A unanimous feeling of indignation burst forth in Mexico when the news became known; the country, which had just won its independence after a cruel struggle

which had lasted for eleven years, and after enduring all the horrors of a war in which no quarter was given, that had seen how its most outstanding leaders were executed, imprisoned and exiled, all in the name of Ferdinand VII, could not without indignation read that Papal encyclical which advised it to return to servitude, under the government of a despot of such unworthy and mean caliber as was the King Of Spain. The Minister of Justice and Ecclesiastical affairs, Miguel Ramos Arizpe, in addition to ordering Francisco Pablo Vasquez, Mexico's representative in the Holy See, to register a protest against that document which it seemed incredible could have been issued by a Court so cautious and so distrustful as that of Rome, made the encyclical circulate among the civil and ecclesiastical authorities of the country, and they unanimously protested against it. But presumably, a majority of ecclesiastics did not take that stand out of patriotism, but because it suited them to do so, and because under the Republic they found themselves much better off than they had been during the Spanish Government. In fact, they had, during the latter, been subject to the authority of the King of Spain, through his patronage; but once Mexico had achieved her independence, they were only nominally subject to the Pope, for as normal relations no longer existed between the Republic and the Holy See, and as no concordat had been entered into between them, the priests

denied the right of the national Government to interfere in the Church, to keep order and discipline; and so they neither obeyed the orders of the Government of the Republic nor those of the Pope; that is why we see how the ecclesiastical chapter, and the Governor of the diocese of Mexico, the Bishop of Puebla, the ecclesiastical chapter of Chiapas and other ecclesiastical corporations protested more or less openly against the encyclical of Leo XII".¹

The bitterest protest came also from a priest, Servando de Teresa y Mier, who, however, with no ulterior motives and seeking only the good of his country, wrote an interesting essay about the encyclical in question. In it he branded the papal document as "an Italian trick of those with which the Court of Rome was wont to avoid the difficulties and obligations to which crowned heads committed it, and which those astute courtiers were the first to make a mock of"; and further he says that "men, by dint of adoring God through His ministers, and of hearing from the lips of the latter what oracles have managed to adore Him and them, have in course of time reached the point of believing them both equally infallible and of confusing their attributes and powers". He then assailed Papal infallibility by means of the doctrines of the Anglican Church and expressed himself in the following terms with regard to the universal dominion claimed by

1. Toro, A., IEM, p. 78.

the Pope: "Nor can I conceive of any greater absurdity among Christians nor how such a belief can last for so long a time when it is in open contradiction to the doctrines of Jesus Christ, His Apostles, the Holy Fathers, and the example set by all of them. Our Saviour said to Pontius Pilate, 'My Kingdom is not of this world'. How, then, can His vicar imagine himself to be the owner thereof? And after reviewing a number of historical events, connected with the temporal power of the Pope, he added that in 1810 the Spaniards would have drawn upon Mexico the Vatican's thunderbolts, had they been able to do so, but that they appealed to bayonets and cannon for victory, though without success. After that Mier boldly propounded a question which many of us hope will in the course of time be solved; this was that of a National Church; and he said the following words: "Catholics as always and glorying in that fact, we have changed no dogmas, morality nor discipline, as set forth by its nature, modifications and ammendments. Even on certain points thereof, in regard to which we might well do without Rome, because it is a case rather of usurpation by the latter than of rights belonging to it, we have preferred to sacrifice our own for the sake of peace and union with the Pope. Our constitution authorizes the President to enter into concordats with the Holy See, and for this purpose a Minister plenipotentiary is already on his way across the seas. If he

should not receive him we have in any case done what is right, the fault will not be our own, the Pope will be responsible to God. So long as we ourselves shall believe everything that is believed by the Universal Church, which is what the word Catholic means, as a dogma necessary for salvation, our own is in no danger; in this regard we are within the ark; even thousands of unjust anathemas would no succeed in driving us out of it. The religion of Jesus Christ, which is heavenly and universal by nature, is not subject to the whims of a minister, to political interests, nor to juggling by Cabinets. Still less is it dependent on particular localities and the crossing of vast oceans. Each Church within itself, so long as it has bishops and priests, has the elements required for its preservation. We shall, should Rome insist, resort to the same methods that all Catholic nations have resorted to in similar circumstances. We shall return to the primitive and holy discipline of the Church, we shall once more be governed by those true and lawful canons which, as Pope Leo the Great says, cannot, as being made with the Spirit of God and consecrated by the reverence of the whole Universe, be abolished by any authority whatever, nor lapse due to the passage of any period of time. Would that I could in my old age see those splendid days of the youth of the Church come back once more; the unfortunate thing is that the mere threat of resorting to

this legal means (which would once for all do away with all those modern pretensions of the Court of Rome, which rest only on the decretals of Isidore, the falsity of which is today notorious) makes the proud Tiber desist from its course. It does not threaten to overflow its banks except against those who, not aware of the limits set to its waves, fear when there is no need for fear".¹

The "First Empire" lasted but nine months. Shortly after Iturbide's proclamation as emperor conflicts broke out between him and the Congress, and Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, Captain-General of Veracruz, proclaimed a republic, promising to support the "Plan de Iguala". At Jalapa he was defeated and driven back to Veracruz; subsequently the army deserted Iturbide, who was compelled to abdicate on April 19, 1823, and shortly after was exiled by the Congress. From that time on Mexican history was one of almost continuous warfare. It was a series of conflicts between the privileged classes, including the Church and the army, and the mass of the people; between Centralists and Federalists, the former being identical with the Church, the army, and the supporters of despotism, the aristocracy, while the latter represented the desire for democracy and self-government. "The first group wanted a monarchy; the second a republic. The first sought to achieve peace by reestablishing the colonial system in

1. Portes Gil, E., LPCC, p. 50 ff.

full; the second wanted to achieve peace by completing the work of independence and destroying the residue of colonial institutions in Mexico which, from their point of view, made peace impossible as long as the old system continued. Between these two groups there could be no peace. The first group looked to Europe for a model, the second to United States. The first derived aid and comfort from the European monarchies, the second from the American republic".¹

As far back as the year 1833, that illustrious and liberal democrat, Valentin Gomez Farias, the forerunner of the Reformation, was given the opportunity of turning his elevation to the vice-presidency of the Republic to good account for taking the first step towards the reduction of the abuses, privileges, and prerogatives of the clergy, by enacting the Law of October 18 of that year.² The policy begun by him was one of improvement and above all of house-cleaning in the administrative regime over which he was to preside. In Dublan and Lozano's collection of laws³ we may read the circular of the Ministry of Justice of June 6, 1833, and that of June 8 following, in which members of the clergy were ordered to behave quietly and not to interfere in political matters.

One of the most important documents of the same period is that which relates to the University, and which

1. Tannenbaum, F., PR, p. 109

2. Parkes, H. B., AHM, p. 197

3. Dublan y Lozano, M., CLCRM, p. 1200 ff.

established the General Bureau of Public Instruction for the Federal District and Territories, promulgated on October 21, 1833.¹ These provisions brought about discontent on the part of the Church which could not assent to any efficient action by a Government to begin destruction of all those obstacles that impeded the onward march of the Government itself. This first and justifiable measure was sufficient to provoke the letting loose of a scandalous protest and sectarian propaganda that never contented itself with the printed word, nor with speeches, nor prayers nor sermons, but which went so far as to foment rebellion among the army, at times when hunger, misery and fanaticism were the ² loyal servants of the Church.

Another document of great value is the circular of the Ministry of Justice of October 27, 1833,³ which provided that the civil obligation to pay tithes ceased; and finally in December 17, 1833, another law ⁴ was issued article one of which ordered: "All curacies now vacant or which may become vacant of the secular clergy shall be filled by regular incumbents in the time and form prescribed by Laws XXIV, XXXV, XLVII, title VI, Book i, of the "recopilacion de Indias". By this Law

1. Ibid. p. 1234.

2. Parkes, H. B., AHM, p. 197.

3. Dublan y Lozano, M., CLCRM, p. 1273.

4. Ibid. p. 1289.

the nation exercised the right of patronage which the Pope, involved in the petty intrigues of a blundering European policy, had never wished to grant. There were Governors like that of Michoacan, who attempted to expel certain seditious bishops, but he found himself directly opposed by the Archbishop of that diocese who openly combated that provision; it was equally opposed by the clergy throughout the country who fomented a revolution, shortly after its enactment, engaging the Mexicans in a fratricidal struggle; Gomez Farias' amendment would certainly have triumphed, had it not been for General Santa Anna's interference who, under the Plan of Cuernavaca,¹ May 25, 1834, hailed by the Church as one of its greatest victories, was called upon as being the only authority in a position to impart protection to the clergy of the Republic. He destroyed the Law of Gomez Farias. "The reforms of a religious nature introduced", said a Catholic writer, "approved by Congress in 1833, have continued to stand except as regards exercise of patronage, for as just stated, the plan for studies was annulled, and the University reopened, another plan was drawn up on the same basis of exclusion of the Clergy in virtue of the extraordinary powers vested in General Santa Anna as a consequence of the Revolution of 1841, and the property of the Church and of pious foundations

1. Leon, N., CHGM, p. 385.

has frequently been threatened by absolute destruction and has been considerably reduced by the portions thereof from time to time taken by the Government, so that the main purpose for which the Clergy so resolutely supported the "Plan de Iguala" has to a great extent ¹ been frustrated".

In the first period of the Federation, the Church in the face of the dangers which began to threaten her property, undertook to dispose of such property without any account or record having been made of the use to which the proceeds of such sales were put. The Government attempted to stop such sales by issuing provisions like the circular of November 18, 1833, and that of January 23, 1834. The Clergy endeavored to justify such sales and alleged the property rights of the Church. After that the Government issued a decree prohibiting all sales of jewels and other articles of gold and silver existing in the churches. Such sales were usually made to foreigners and depleted the artistic resources of the country and called for the direct intervention of the Government. This decree did not please the Clergy, and the protest of the Bishop of Michoacan, Juan Calletano Portugal, breathed clerical absolutism and advocated the absolute elimination of the civil power in matters so closely affecting public order. The matter

1. Alaman, L. HM, p. 368.

was referred to Justices Manuel de la Pena y Pena and Jose M. Jauregui for study, and they decided the question, in an interesting document, against the Church.¹

The Conservative Party enjoyed times of great splendor, and the Clergy felt highly satisfied in view of the efficient protection received by them from the dominant political regime. The country had fallen under the centralism sanctioned on October 10, 1835. History records with authentic documents that even the Conservative Government was not able to carry out its work without taking necessary measures against the property and the political power of the Church; the Conservative Government, in fact, without going to the same lengths of radicalism as the Liberals, took the first measures against the property of the Clergy. We may note, for instance, what Anastacio Bustamante, who was supported by the Clergy, said: "The evils that afflict the Nation are notorious as well as serious. An exhausted treasury, habits and customs day by day more depraved, insecurity for life and property in a land overrun by bandits, and side by side with these calamities, universal misery, confusion, disagreement in everything and an ever growing spirit of disunion and discord are almost typical of the unfortunate society we at present live in".²

The state of society was in complete disorganization, caused mainly by the intrigues of the Catholic

1. Cf. Portes Gil, E., LPCC, p. 83.

2. Icazbalceta, G. J., CDHM, Vol. III, p. 33.

Clergy; "in those days when the Church ruled the nation which was in a state of absolute ruin in the midst of the most utter misery while she enjoyed her enormous wealth amassed out of the blood of the people, the idea that the Government was a bitter enemy of the Church, as happened in the case of Santa Anna when he for the purpose of meeting public expenses applied to the clergy for a loan, and when he issued his decree of October 13, 1841, which forbade sales of property belonging to the Clergy without prior permission of the Government, made the Clergy raise and outcry against these measures in their insatiable greed and mean desire not to contribute to the welfare of a people that had bestowed on them so many benefits".¹

The Church's lack of a sense of national responsibility is manifest at the time of the war with United States and of the French intervention. These pages of the history of Mexico are perhaps to Mexicans the most painful, and it is exceedingly grievous to see how political passions overrode all interest in favor of the country.

In connection with the war with United States, in the "Diario del Gobierno", (the Government's official paper) in 1846, the following statements were made: "General Santa Anna has busied himself with taking all the measures necessary for organizing the two brigades that have marched. Subsequently commissioned by the Supreme Government to apply for the necessary financial

1. Portes Gil, E., LPCC, p. 54

resources, he urged the venerable clergy and convened, by requesting their attendance, a meeting of capitalists. The Clergy, through the Archdeacon of this Church, consented to mortgage real estate to the value of two million pesos; the capitalists appointed a committee that drew up a scheme for loans and it seemed to be highly probable that a million pesos in cash would promptly be raised. But the "agiotists" (usurers) converted into usury and speculation what was merely a matter of help and assistance, and distorted the good intentions by which all were animated; the proposed lenders began to suggest giving one million pesos in cash and another million in credits, and exacted the condition that they were to select the properties to be mortgaged, and that if not paid within two years they were to foreclose on the properties without option to extend the deeds. In order to carry on the war with the United States, the Government found itself compelled to apply to the clergy whether they wished or not. The protest of the Metropolitan Chapter against this was virtually an act of rebellion; they said that the Church was sovereign and that she could not be deprived of her property by any authority; that only force could take her property".

On January 14, the Vice-President of the Republic, Gomez Farias, through the Ministry of Justice, informed the Chapter that they were attempting to incite the people

to rebellion and that although the Government was strong enough to suppress any revolt, he thought it his duty to see that such alarms did not occur again. And he ended with these words: "History will pass judgment on this resistance which would not, even in the Middle Ages, have attracted proselytes, and will also judge the Government of the Republic which cannot sustain itself if lacking the means to satisfy the urgent needs of its army at this time when our soil has been desecrated by the foot of a foreign foe who threatens to destroy our altars. The Vice-president does not fear the decision and both as a Christian and as a ruler, considers that he is strictly obliged to comply with a law intended to save both our territory and our beliefs; and he therefore instructs me to tell your Honor that if the Holy Cathedral Church should not open its doors, and that if for this reason the public peace should be disturbed, he will find himself compelled to take such severe and efficient measures of repression as circumstances may require".¹

Gomez Farias stood out prominently; no threat had been sufficient to make him waver. Yet in spite of his firm attitude the Clergy did not hesitate to foment the rebellion of the "Polkos" which aimed at the destruction of the established Government, the defense of the property of the Church, and at the introduction once

1. Icazbalceta, G. J., CDHM, p. 57 ff

more of the monarchical ideas which had characterized the administration of General Paredes. But even though it cost his deposition from the Vice-Presidency, Gomez Farias succeeded in supressing the movement on March 28, 1847.¹

Subsequently, the Government came under the control of the Moderate Party, which treated the Clergy with every consideration.² With the governments of Pena, Herrera and Arista begins the period of work and conspiracy on behalf of a monarchy, after a fomenting of constant clerical revolutions, like that in Puebla, until the Conservatives should again compass their own mean interests. Santa Anna, who had lost the admiration and respect of his followers after losing the war with United States, was exiled, and with his departure the Conservatives lost their most outstanding leader. In fact, his exile marked the turning point in the contest between Conservatives and Liberals, between monarchists and Republicans, between the Church and the Bureaucrats and the people striving for liberty and democracy. Liberalism was now acquiring leaders who had inherited the idealism and integrity of Gomez Farias but who were more skilled in politics and more determined never to accept defeat. Fiercely patriotic, they knew that only subordination of the Church and the army to the civil authorities could

1. Parkes, H. B., AHM, p. 287
2. Toro, A., IEM, 195, ff

put to an end the anarchy of Mexico.¹

One of these patriots was Melchor Ocampo, a scientist and able statesman, and Governor of Michoacan; he submitted a petition to the Congress of that State in regard to tariff reform and parochial perquisites. The Revolution of Ayutla, marking the point of advance towards the destruction of the Conservative dictatorship and despotism, foretold a period of such a great importance to the destinies of the nation, that it made Fonseca, the Minister of Justice, exclaim in 1852, "The natural course of events, the lengthy time during which the metropolitan diocese was without a shepherd in the early years of independence, and the agitations throughout the country which have to so great a degree contributed to demoralize the great mass of the people and to relax all the sources of power and authority, have exercised a pernicious influence on the secular and regular clergy; the former are far from possessing the doctrine, knowledge and virtues inherent in its sacred ministry, and the latter are in a still more deplorable condition".²

On September 24, 1855, Juan Alvarez arrived at Iguala where he convened a National Council that was to meet on October 4 in the city of Cuernavaca, in order to appoint a provisional president who would pursue the principles of the "Plan de Ayutla". Such Council appointed

1. Parkes, H. B., AHM, pp. 222 ff
 2. Toro, A., IEM, p. 233.

Alvarez himself, and he in that capacity called an extraordinary Congress to constitute the Nation under a form of government democratic and representative which met on February in Mexico City. The revolution of Ayutla that raised General Alvarez to power was an eminently popular and well-engineered movement. The clear-minded liberal spirits who cooperated with the elderly President stood for a hope of progress for the future of the Republic. But the Clergy continued their obstinate opposition, and circumstances compelled Alvarez to resign, probably on account of the fact of having enacted the Law of November 23, 1855, usually called the "Juarez Law", which abolished the clerical and military "fueros" or privileges.¹ The passing of that Law was due to the greatest man of the Reformation, Benito Juarez, one of the eminent men of the country, a former Governor of Oaxaca, who was virulently attacked and persecuted by dictator Santa Anna on account of his advanced liberal ideas, and who joined the revolution of Ayutla. In the Cabinet of President Alvarez he was appointed Minister of Justice, and from this post he began his offensive against the Clergy.²

As a result of the promulgation of the Law Juarez, the nation was again drenched in blood at the instigation of the Clergy. A priest, Ortega y Garcia, at Zacapoaxtla, under the war cry of "Religion and Privileges",

1. Leon, N., CHGM, p. 391; Parkes, H. B., AHM, p. 229
 2. Leon, N., CHGM, p. 389

began a revolt, the leadership of which was later on taken by Antonio Haro who took possession of Puebla the twenty-second of January, 1856, only to be defeated by Comonfort in Ocotlan.¹

These events did not prevent the holding of the Congress of 1856; it began its work by appointing Arriaga, Yanez, Olvera, Romero, Diaz, Cardenas, Guzman, Escudero y Echanove to draw up a draft for a Constitution.² In the meantime, Congress revised the acts and legislation of Santa Anna and the campaign against the reactionaries of Puebla,³ at the session of April 15.⁴ The discussion began of the political reforms proposed by the Liberal Party. A study of the "Ley Juarez" was made, being immediately ratified in the face of Castaneda's opposition.⁵ The moderate ideas of Comonfort, who had succeeded Alvarez, threatened to disturb harmonious relations with Congress. Yet, in spite of his semi-conservative ideas matters were coming to a climax in many ways. Orders were issued for the suppression of some of the convents, for a severe cut in the size of the army, and finally, on the twenty-fifth of June, 1856, the Minister of Finance, Miguel Lerdo fe Tejada, submitted to the approval of Congress the "Ley Lerdo", a law that abolished the right of civil and ecclesiastical corporations to hold real property,

1. Toro, A., IEM, p. 242 ff

2. Portes Gil, E., LPCC, p. 60

3. Cf. above, p. 73

4. Zarco, F., HCEC, Vol. I, p. 211

5. Ibid., p. 212 ff

except that which was directly used for the purposes of worship. The price of the property, when sold, was to be the sum which at six per cent would yield the rent actually being charged. If any given property was not rented, it should be sold at auction in the presence of a government official.¹

"The law did not mean that Church property was to be confiscated for the use of the nation. It was an attempt to force all large property holders to disgorge and sell their enormous holdings, so as to get the land into the hands of the middle and poorer classes and give them that incentive which comes from private ownership--an incentive which they had never felt. It was also hoped and expected that property would become more mobile when broken up into smaller pieces, and that its productivity, value, and service to the nation would be greater with the abolition once and for all of the evils of absentee landlordism and poor supervision".² In other words, the "Ley Lerdo" was the attempt to destroy feudalism, which was the main purpose of the Reformation.

As a result of the promulgation of the "Ley Lerdo", active opposition began again. On the other hand, this did not constitute a reason why the clergy should not avail themselves of that law. "Listen to something that meant the culmination of the scandals of the time: the Archbishop suspended the dean of the metropolitan

1. Toro, A., IEM, p. 247 ff

2. Callicott, CSM, p. 249

Cathedral and two other canons that were highly respected by the Chapter and the City, because they had obtained the award to themselves of the house in which they lived, by availing themselves of the rights granted to them by the law of Disentailment. Each one of them pleaded in defense that the award had not been made to him, but to his sisters; the case became notorious because everyone understood what there really was at the bottom; the liberal journals pointed to the case as evidence of the fact that that Law was not, after all, so very impious".¹

Although some of the Clergy, the Archbishop of Guadalajara among them, regarded the Ley Lerdo just and right,² the Archbishop of Mexico protested against it, and stated that he would not comply with it, and he proposed that the matter be submitted to the Pope for settlement; to this Ezequiel Montes replied that "the Government recognized no one as superior to it to arrange the purely temporal matters of the nation, but that the Archbishop could apply to the Pope in order to set his conscience at rest".³

In the meantime, the committee in charge of the formulation of a Constitution had concluded their work; a draft was presented and discussed and approved on July 4, 1856, in which were incorporated each one of the main gains of the liberal belief. The Constitution

1. Portilla, A., GGC, p. 106

2. Callicott, W. H., CSM, 251

3. Portes Gil, E., LPCC, p. 61

was issued on February 5, and proclaimed on March 17, 1857, and orders were given that it be sworn by the whole of the authorities and public officers of the Republic.¹

The Clergy launched a fresh attack on the laws of the Republic. Dr. Parra cites the deplorable and scandalous fact that in Colima, Governor Manuel Alvarez, having sworn allegiance to the Constitution, was murdered and was not buried until after his body had been whipped and his family made to pay two thousand pesos for his burial.² Similar outrages and crimes were committed in the name of the Church. The Clergy threatened with excommunication those who took the oath. Nobody who accepted the Constitution, or who acquired clerical property, might come to confession or receive Christian burial or enjoy any other of the ministrations of the Church. Through the spring of 1857 the oath was applied, and the bureaucrats were caught between two fires. Many, in fear of excommunication, preferred to sacrifice their positions and their salaries; others took the oath, but in fear and trembling before the ghostly powers of the Church. Comonfort and the members of his Cabinet were barred from entering the Cathedral of Mexico. Among the bishops who were most exasperated by the proclamation of the Constitution and who in open rebellion refused to recognize it, alleging that it contained attacks against the freedom of the Church,

1. Zarco, F., HCEC, Vol. I, p. 430 ff; Vol. II, p. 56 ff
 2. Parra, P., RM, p. 191

the irascible Bishop of Michoacan, Munguia, drew on himself unfortunate celebrity by his writings addressed to the Minister of Justice in which he asserted that he did not accept the Constitution because it was in opposition to the sovereignty, independence, and the dignity of the Church; to him such things as freedom of education, freedom of thought, freedom of press, freedom of association, and suppression of special privileges in behalf of a whole nation--all this was in direct opposition to the teachings of the Church.¹

Comonfort indulged in dreams of reconciliation, an impossibility from every point of view. His envoy to Rome, Ezequiel Montes, was not even received by the Roman Pontiff.² It was necessary that in the midst of the confusion of political events, a man should arise who would have the courage required to face all the evils afflicting the Mexican State, and that man was Benito Juarez who as Vice-President lent moral support and strength to the wavering government of Comonfort. The Clergy awaited the turn of political events, and their work was crowned by obtaining control of the conscience and the will of President Comonfort, whom they supposed to be entirely dominated by the so-called "Plan de Tacubaya", a coup d'etat the consequences of which were greatly reflected in Mexico's life and for which the obstinacy and pertinacity of the

1. Toro, A., IEM, p. 258

2. Portilla, A., GCG, 135

Clergy were alone responsible.¹

Zuloaga, under the aegis of Comonfort, seized the Capital and disowned the Constitution. Juarez was imprisoned. The "Plan of Tacubaya" seemed to be about to bear its first fruits. On abandoning the Capital of the Republic he released Juarez, who began then his plan for reorganization. As he found himself unable to make resistance to Osorio and Miramon, he left Guadalajara and later on Colima also, and proceeded to Veracruz, having previously appointed Degollado as Commander-in-Chief of the Constitutional forces. Miramon, who had previously written from Guadalajara announcing his refusal to acknowledge the established order of things, in what was called the "Plan de Navidad", arrived in Mexico on January 21, 1858, and reinstated Zuloaga in the Presidency. Zuloaga proved to be incompetent, and therefore Miramon had himself appointed as substitute President and formed a cabinet composed of conservative elements.²

Juarez was legally entitled to the acting presidency under the Constitution. In fact he organized a Cabinet and, during the ensuing two or three years, fought bravely and consistently for his cause. We cannot follow step by step the war that ensued called the Reformation war, which was one of the bitterest of the many with which Mexico has been cursed. Plunder and rapine attended the

1. Leon, N., CHGM, p. 395; Parkes, H. B., AHM, p. 239-41

2. Leon, N., CHGM, p. 397

armies in the field; prisoners were slaughtered in cold blood; the irreconcilability of the Clergy sowed hatred and dissension withing the family, and directed a devastating war in the battlefield and from the press, the pulpit, and the confessional. "On the other hand, one of the inspiring things in Mexican History is the bulldog tenacity with which Juarez fought on throughout the war, finally reaching the highest office in the land, but still without financial benefit to himself or his family".¹

Slowly but surely the liberals advanced, until they were able to enter the Capital and dominate the country, December, 1860. The movement that had begun in 1810 was now coming to a head. Partly as war measures and partly a matter of principle there were promulgated a series of laws in July, 1859, which became known as the "Reformation Laws". They were issued by Juarez from his itinerant headquarters while the Clergy celebrated with Te Deums the victories of reactionary Miramon.² Such Laws included the separation of Church and State, the suppression of monasteries and convents, the extinction of all kinds of religious orders, the nationalization of the Church's property, and the establishment of freedom of religion. Protestants were for the first time permitted to enter the country.³

An eminent jurist says: "In view of the economic

1. Callicott, W. H., CSM, p. 318

2. Toro, A., IEM, p. 271 ff

3. Ibid. p. 278

superiority of the Clergy over the Government, nationalization of Church property was an economic as well as political achievement; economic, because it threw back into circulation and into the fruitful stream of individual ownership 200,000,000 pesos worth of real property and money lent on mortgage the returns from which were devoted to superfluous expenses, such as processions, solemnities, the support of useless monasteries, etc.; and political because it deprived the Clergy of their weapons, whose tendencies, from their very nature contrary to the progressive tendencies of any civil Government, had impelled them to spend the funds they held in their hands on continuous political intrigues and revolutions, from that of Escalada in 1833, on behalf of clerical privileges, up to that of Puebla, in 1856, contrary to the program of Ayutla". The disorder provoked by the Clergy started up again, but Juarez' faith was immense, his activity was prodigious, his understanding of the great work he was carrying out clear and precise.

On his return to Mexico City on January, 1861, he formed his Cabinet and proclaimed his program which in part said: "The Laws of Reformation are not, as stated by party spirit, an act of hostility to the religion professed by a majority of Mexicans; far from

1. Pallares, J., LFCDCM, p. XLI.

being so, they grant to the Church the fullest liberty, and leave it free to carry on its work in the spirit and conscience of the people; they separate it from the unworthy influences of politics and put an end to that fatal partnership of two powers that gave rise to such scandalous situations as that the Governments abused the name of religion by oppressing it, and that the Clergy became an instrument of domination. The Government is firmly resolved to carry into effect the reforms; to introduce them throughout the Republic and to make their benefits felt by spreading them over all classes of society, from those at the top to the most destitute".¹

Juarez then proceeded to dispose of the vast property belonging to the Church. At that time the clerical party which, as later graphically expressed in a letter from Empress Carlota to the Empress Eugenie, "would with pleasure abandon their place of honor and their crosses, but not their income",² attempted to make a supreme effort to overthrow Juarez and to save that property for which they had again and again betrayed the country.³ The establishment of a second empire under the rule of a foreign prince protected and supported by a foreign army seemed to them the best procedure to

1. Portes Gil, E., LPCC, p. 164.

2. Toro, A., IEM, p. 332.

3. Parkes, H. B., AHM, 251 ff.

preserve their interests.

A committee of reactionaries headed by Juan N. Almonte and inspired by the turbulent Archbishop of Mexico, labastida, set out for Europe and induced Napoleon to believe that the saner elements of Mexico were desirous of foreign intervention to restore the peace disturbed by factions described in dismal terms.¹ Emile Ollivier, after praising and describing Juarez' personality in vivid terms, says of the conservatives: "their conduct was very different; they treated their unfortunate land like a country conquered by blood and fire".² On the arrival of the invading troops and after they had violated the agreements concluded at La Soledad, the French marched on Mexico, and gradually came to realize the misapprehension into which they had been led, which induced General Lorencez to write: "We have no one on our side here; the reactionary party, now almost destroyed, is abhorred. The liberals have seized the property of the clergy, which property constitutes the greater part of Mexico".³

Notwithstanding the indications received by the French soldiers to the effect that they were not welcome, there was one moment, (when the Metropolitan Chapter welcomed the invading army headed by General Forey, the insolent Almonte and the traitor Marquez,

1. Toro, A., IEM, p. 300 ff.

2. Ollivier, E., EL, p.8.

3. Ibid. p. 79.

with a solemn Te Deum in the Cathedral) when Forey was able to believe that only an insignificant faction actually opposed the plans of the conservatives, and that the latter did represent the popular will, and for some time he led the Emperor to believe this, all the more as General Forey did not see things through his own eyes but through those of Dubois de Saligny, whom the Emperor had charged him to take for his guide and leader as having a thorough knowledge of the Mexican people and politics.¹

The clerical committee stayed in Europe, and their activities were only evinced by the measures taken by Napoleon III and the manner in which he controlled the French army, as such committee, the organ and instrument of the clerical party, served as a glass through which the Emperor gazed at the Mexican question, and interpreted the information he received. Thus it was that, although he wished, before taking the Archduke Maximilian's candidacy seriously, that the vote of all the inhabitants of Mexico be taken, he succeeded in convincing himself that even if the vote was not absolutely representative yet that it was sufficient to constitute good grounds for awaiting the consolidation of Maximilian's throne. Saligny was a politician allied to the Clergy, the one who worked the manoeuvre for the benefit of the army; and when the provisional Government or Regency was

1. Toro, A., IEM, p. 308 ff.

established after the French invaders had driven Juarez and his Cabinet out of the Capital, and after Maximilian had sent his consent to accept the crown, Saligny was able to boast that he had raised to power the "retrograde clerical party", as Ollivier calls it. This is how this writer describes the moment when the reactionary party achieved the victory they thought would be final; "The victors wished to profit by their triumph; they intimated to the holders of nationalized church property that they did not look upon them as the owners. Lessees were warned not to pay their rent, because they would run the risk of having to pay twice over. The last Sacrament and Christian burial were denied to those who declined to make restitution. An official provision forbade work on Sundays. Another provided that everybody must kneel when the Holy Sacrament passed by. Records relating to civil status were returned to the clergy and titles of nobility reestablished, as was the ancient order of Guadalupe; like vultures that have scented a dead body, the leaders of the retrograde party hastened back; Santa Anna's son landed at Veracruz to prepare the way for his father, and Miramon arrived in Mexico. They were ready for a spectacular and final victory; the Emperor would soon arrive, the Laws of Reform would be repealed, the coveted property of the Church which constituted the true motive of the reaction-

aries for bringing about intervention would return to the possession of the Clergy, and they would receive the reward for their treason, by again becoming the lords of everything".¹

Their illusions, however, were short-lived. The Emperor came and was received with a specious show of solemnity organized by the clerical party, and he was given to understand that he had come to subserve the interests of the Conservative Party. But great was their surprise when they found that Maximilian was not disposed to make the protection of the Clergy's interests one of his aims, but to pursue a policy of conciliation by ratifying the laws providing for the secularization of Church property. This change of course was perhaps not wholly spontaneous, but may have been dictated by Napoleon III, as Ollivier's words seem to indicate: "A complete change had come over the Emperor's mind. He had succeeded in seeing through the cloud of lies in which he had been enwrapped; he had guessed of just what kind of reactionary work they wanted to make him a tool; he had decided on a change of course; and, calling Saligny, he discarded the Conservative Party and left it to the mercy of the Liberals". In another place the same writer says: "Bazaine proceeded to carry out the new instructions received from the Emperor. He annulled the decree on sequestration and all the other reactionary measures adopted by the Regency; and although he postponed the

¹. Ollivier, E., EL, p. 113.

time of giving security to holders of Church property until Monseigneur Labastida should arrive, he told him that he (Bazaine) had come back for the purpose of reconstructing the domain seized from the clergy. Bazaine answered that his instructions were to the contrary. The Prelate replied that he had laid his views before His Majesty, who had seemed to approve them; and that his dignity and his conscience forbade him to accept any solution until authorized by the Holy Father. There are several other passages in which Marshal Bazaine himself had acrimonious encounters with the Archbishop who, he said, had become unbearable on account of his resistance". Ollivier adds that "seven Bishops joined the Archbishop in a protest against what they called the spoliation of the Church, and threatened any one cooperating therein with major excommunication, alluding of course to the Emperor himself as well; they reached the point of revealing their true attitude so clearly, by saying without circumlocution that if he recognized the validity of the secularization of the property of the Church, what was the good of intervention? That the Emperor had been called by them to repeal the laws of Juarez, not to ratify and execute them".¹

From this no one can have any doubts as to the true meaning of intervention, nor as to the responsibility accruing to the baneful and ambitious Clergy of Mexico in
 1. Ollivier, E., EL, p. 125 ff., 132 ff.

the bitterest period of its history. But their venture failed; with the execution of Maximilian and their military leaders, Miramon and Mejia, vanished the last hope of the Church to retain its privileges and prerogatives. Unfortunately for the Church, "the memory of that foreign invasion strengthened the feeling among the leaders of the liberal groups that the Church was not only feudal in its attitude toward Mexican social and economic institutions, but also antinational, unpatriotic, and willing to barter away Mexican nationalism, Mexican democracy, Mexican freedom, to save its own "¹"fueros".

"The tragedy of 1867 consummated and made the triumph of liberal and reformist ideas final and national. In 1861 the Conservative Party had only been conquered and disarmed; but it existed and was a constant menace to peace, and to its intrigues was due the fatal tendency towards the establishment in Mexico of an Empire; but after the frightful breakdown of the latter, the Conservative Party became totally disorganized and ceased to play any part whatsoever on the political state, and took its place solely in the realms of history."²

Shortly after Juarez and his wandering Cabinet returned to Mexico City, the former published a manifesto in which he said in part: "Mexicans: I congratulate

1. Tannenbaum, F., PR, p. 63.
2. Parra, P., RM, p. 236.

you on the reestablishment of peace and on the rich fruits of the victories achieved by our valiant hosts... Thanks to you who learned to undertake and carry through the gigantic enterprise of Democracy in Mexico, an armed oligarchy no longer exists in the land of Hidalgo and Morelos, nor that other more terrible oligarchy of the clergy which seemed to be unconquerable because of the influence of time, interests and prestige. Reform was the champion of democracy and the people have spilt their blood profusely in order to make it victorious over all its enemies. Neither freedom, nor constitutional order, nor progress, nor peace, nor the independence of the Nation, would have been possible without
^l
Reform."

1. Portes Gil, E., LPCC, p. 96.

CHAPTER IV
DICTATORSHIP AND REVOLUTION

IV. DICTATORSHIP AND REVOLUTION.

On July 18, 1872, the President of the Republic, Benito Juarez, died after a life of service to his country, having proved the saviour of the republican principles embodied in the Constitution of 1857, and after having issued and put into force the Laws of Reformation. At his death the Catholic Clergy of Mexico had been almost completely defeated, and their representative organization, the Conservative Party, had suffered two tremendous setbacks in the struggle; the first was an economic defeat, consisting in the nationalization of a great part of their property, real estate and money lent on mortgages, destined to carry on indefinitely the civil war, in the hope that victory would bring the abrogation of the Constitution and of the Laws of Reformation; the second was a political and social defeat, since the Government of the Republic had by law taken control of all acts pertaining to the civil status of the people, making these acts, such as civil marriage, legally valid without reference to any religious creeds, and definitely establishing freedom of worship.

The country appointed as President Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada, who had ably assisted Juarez in the bitter struggle against the Conservative Party and

who in order that the Laws of Reformation should not so easily be abrogated and to confirm their enforcement, raised them to the rank of constitutional precepts on September 25, 1873, in accordance with the following amendment:

"The Constitution shall be amended as follows:

Art. 1- The State and the Church shall be independent one from the other.

Art. 2- Matrimony is a civil contract.

Art. 3- No religious institution shall acquire real estate nor moneys lent on mortgages with the sole exception established by Article 27 of the Constitution.

Art. 4- A simple promise to speak the truth and to carry out the obligations assumed, shall substitute the religious oath with its effects and penalties.

Art. 5- No one shall be compelled to render personal services without just compensation and without his full consent. The State shall not permit any contract, covenant or agreement to be carried out having for its object the abridgement, loss or irrevocable sacrifice of the liberty of man, whether by reason of labor, education or religious vows. The law therefore does not recognize the establishment of monastic

orders nor shall it countenance their existence, whatever be their denomination, or for whatever purpose
they be contemplated".¹

With the purpose of disobeying the Constitution and the Laws of Reformation, and of preventing the Catholics who held public offices under the administration from making the affirmation by law provided, the Clergy decreed that all those who should make the affirmation would be excommunicated, declaring by means of pastorals of the Bishops and by sermons of the parish priests that those persons, that is to say the Catholics, should not obey the Constitution of the Republic and the Laws of Reformation. Furthermore, the Clergy were not content with these measures, but incited the Catholic people to rebellion and provoked various uprisings led by the priests themselves, especially in Michoacan, Jalisco, Mexico, and Guanajuato, in the course of which all kinds of crimes were committed against those who did not sympathize with them and who supported the Government. The rebels attacked defenseless villages murdering, burning, and sacking, and their atrocities reached such a point, that at Angangueo they captured the Mayor, tarred him and set him on fire, just because he had sworn allegiance to the Constitution. At Zinacatepec they murdered the public employees who had also sworn their allegiance, replacing them by others

1. Toro, A., IEM, p. 349.

who had not done so. The rebels went further yet with the pretensions of legalizing their rebellious attitude, for on November 31, 1875, they proclaimed a revolutionary political plan with the sole object of calling together a constituent assembly to abrogate the Constitution, to establish the Roman Catholic Church as the official Church of the country, and to settle the religious question by means of a concordat to be entered into with the Pope. The enemies of Lerdo de Tejada were numerous and among them appeared General Porfirio Diaz, who had distinguished himself for his military success in the war against the French, having been a faithful follower of Juarez, and who had previously aspired to the Presidency; uprisings succeeded each other; and taking advantage of these circumstances, in January 1876, Diaz proclaimed the Plan of Tuxtepec which, while declaring supreme the Constitution, provided for the abolition of the Laws of Reformation; other items of such program included the non-re-election of the President of the Republic and the Governors of the States, and the disavowal of the authority of Lerdo de Tejada.¹

Not only the partisans of Diaz but also the discontented followers of the President contributed to his downfall; and as Article 8 of the Plan of Ayutla

1. Leon, N., CHGM, 491 ff.; Parkes, H. B., AHM, 277 ff. Toro, A., IEM, p. 351 ff.

provided that the ranks of the military men would be recognized, many officers who served at the time of the Empire joined the ranks of the rebellion. The Catholic Clergy, on the other hand, contributed with their funds and with their preaching in the hope of obtaining from the new administration the realization of their aims.¹

In fact, from the contemporary press we know that the Clergy promised to support Diaz provided he entered into a concordat with Rome whereby the Church would be made the official Church of Mexico. "This connivance of the Porfirists with the clergy has now been made perfectly clear. The Catholic journalist, Jose Joaquin Terrazas, declared in 1885, in his paper 'El Reino Guadalupano' that General Porfirio Diaz had agreed with the clergy in 1876 to enter into a Concordat with the Pope and to abrogate the Laws of Reformation provided that the clergy should lend him all assistance in order to bring about the downfall of Lerdo de Tejada's Government, and if this Concordat was not carried out it was due to the energetic opposition of Justice Manuel Dublan and other liberal politicians whose arguments made an impression on the mind of General Diaz".²

The Plan of Tuxtepec triumphed, and once Lerdo de Tejada was overthrown, Diaz proclaimed him-

1. Rabasa, E., LCD, p. 13ff.

2. Toro, A., IEM, p. 354.

self President of the Republic without regard to the terms of the plan which placed him in power in 1877. In 1880 he was succeeded by General Manuel Gonzalez, and at the end of his term in 1884, Diaz again was elected. In his second term his first aim became to lay the foundation of his continuous rule, and in order to achieve it he amended the Constitution as often as he thought fit, according to the needs of his policy, with the assistance of the Governors of the States, appointed by him and chosen among his friends, partisans and followers who also perpetuated their rules in those governments; the remaining offices of the administration, those of the judicial and the legislative powers, were also filled by followers of his without regard to their political or religious convictions, the only requisite demanded being submission and partisanship. In order to surround himself with friends and followers he used great tact and prudence calling to his side those persons who owing to their wealth or intelligence might have censured or attacked in any way his administration. If the person called upon accepted the blandishments, he was given an appointment in accordance with his ability. This policy consistently applied during his whole administrative period had for its aim the indefinite continuance in power, the actual establishment

of a dictatorship and unquestioning compliance with the will of the President, without regard to original partisanship or friendship; and thus he was able by violent means, condemned by society and historical criticism, to rid himself of Generals Corona and de la Cadena and of a group of liberals in the State of Veracruz. The majority of his Cabinet ministers remained in office for lengthy periods, but at the same time Diaz created certain divergencies between them in order to prevent any one of them from rising too much to the fore in the public opinion or from aiming at the presidential office.

With respect to his policy of conciliation we have the words of a contemporary author: "General Diaz during his life as a revolutionary recognized the material and moral power of the Clergy, the social power of the wealthy classes, the political force wielded by the Catholics, and realized that a tendency to exclusiveness is the shroud of Governments. He entered into personal relations with the higher Clergy, accepted the petition to appoint Catholics, put a stop to persecution, and shut his eyes at the existence of conventicles. So conciliatory was the policy adopted at the time, so close were the relations between the government of Diaz and the Catholic Clergy, that the latter

held posts in the Houses, in the federal and local courts, in the ministries and in the local governments".¹

The members of the Clergy profited from so favorable a situation, and it was the easiest thing in the world for them to violate the Constitution and the Laws of Reformation. Through their influence the last part of Article 27 of the Constitution was amended as follows: "The religious bodies and institutions, regardless of their character, denomination, duration and purpose, and the civil bodies or institutions when these be under the patronage, direction, or administration of the first mentioned or of some minister of any religion whatever, shall have no legal capacity to acquire in fee, or to administer other real property than the buildings destined immediately and directly to the service or purposes of said bodies or institutions, nor shall they have legal capacity to acquire and administer money invested in mortgages.

The civil bodies or institutions finding themselves in the case above mentioned shall be able to acquire and administer in addition to the above mentioned buildings, such real property and moneys invested in mortgages on the security of these, as may be required for the maintainance and purposes of the same, in accordance with the requisites and limitations prescribed by

the Federal Law which to that effect shall be issued by
¹
 Congress".

In accordance with this amendment the Clergy were able to acquire real property intended for the purposes of the institutions according to the interpretation given to the above mentioned constitutional precept. This real property consisted in rectories, episcopal residences, etc.; but they could not make these acquisitions under the Law issued by Lerdo de Tejada on December 14, 1874, which only granted the beneficial use (*usufructo*) of such property, paramount ownership over which was reserved to the Nation.

In view of this policy of conciliation and of the twisted interpretation of the law as amended, the Clergy used every opportunity to acquire real estate, including episcopal palaces, rectories and the annexes of the churches, under the pretext that such properties were directly intended for the purposes of the institution. Other acquisitions were carried out through the agency of private persons related to them in whom the Clergy had complete confidence; and thus one can understand that archbishops, bishops, priests, deacons and other ministers of religion appeared as great land-owners, owning urban property as well, and carrying out loans of every nature, generally guaranteed by real

1. Portes Gil, E., LPCC, p. 87.

property as security. The Clergy also carried out commercial transactions, forming limited companies with considerable capital in which appeared as principal share-holders all those engaged in religious work, the lay members contributing only comparatively small sums.¹ One may question the right of the liberal legislators to forbid the Clergy to acquire property, but in view of the misuse of such property and wealth which only served to perpetuate feudalism, many of us think that that was the only procedure for such legislators to take.

On the other hand, the Church under Diaz' regime must be given credit for its interest displayed in the establishment of educational centers, grammar and high schools, as well as institutions of higher learning in the main centers of the country, although one can discover also that in many cases the mercenary motive was the impelling force. Furthermore, as was to be expected, the education imparted in these schools was deficient as a consequence of their religious sectarianism, the text-books used being in accordance with the religious doctrine and practices of the Church.² Interest was also shown in the establishment of charitable institutions, as asylums, hospitals, etc., which were placed under the charge of nuns and members of different orders.³

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1. Rabasa, E., LCD, P. 17.
 2. Trejo, C. L. T., LRN, p. 153 ff.
 3. Rabasa, E., LCD, p. 31 ff.

At last it seemed as if the Church had learned through what Catholic writers call persecution, that attempts for political domination brought in return only extermination; it seemed as if the Church had become aware that she had a mission for all kinds of people regardless of their political and economic affiliation. And perhaps some prelates were really sincere in their efforts to lead the people toward a higher life, economically and culturally speaking. But we know that this was the attitude displayed at the beginning of the Diaz' administration with the sole aim to reorganize the Clergy's political power and to recuperate the Church's lost interests. Shortly before, and during the Maderist Revolution, the Church controlled press which included such papers as "El País", "La Nación", "La Voz de México", and "La Voz de la Verdad" clearly revealed the Church's intention to support the feudalism and peonage instituted by Diaz, nowhere else described more vividly and condemned more bitterly than in Madero's "La Sucesión Presidencial" and Turner's "Barbarous Mexico". "In Diaz's policy of conciliation what was considered was not the permanent well-being of the Mexican nation but how far any particular faction might become dangerous to the dictatorship. The various groups who for the past half century had been

instigating plans and 'pronunciamientos'--the land-owners, the Clergy, the generals, the 'caciques', the foreign-born capitalists, the intelligentsia, even the brigand chieftains--all these were converted into faithful adherents of Don Porfirio. The people who were ignored in the distribution of favors were the peasant and proletarian masses who--without leadership--had no means of asserting their interests. The meaning of the Porfirian dictatorship was that the bands of wolves, instead of fighting each other as they had been doing ever since the establishment of independence, were now invited to join each other in an attack on the sheep-folds. Peace achieved by such methods could scarcely be permanent; and when senile decay brought about the fall of the dictator, the accumulated resentment of the masses burst out into social revolution.

Whether a more enlightened and less cynical statesmanship could have given Mexico peace is questionable. Diaz had found a formula for ending civil war, and for the first time since the establishment of the Republic, Mexico was able to devote herself to economic development. It was in the methods by which he stimulated that development, rather than in his political program, that Diaz committed his most disastrous blunders. Wishing to encourage the investment of money from abroad,

he gave away Mexico's national resources to foreign entrepreneurs. Proposing to transform Mexico into a capitalistic nation, he allowed the Indians to be robbed of such land as they still possessed. Industrialization was imposed mercilessly and recklessly, without plan or forethought, and with no attempt to mitigate its evils, upon a country which was not ready for it. The national income and the revenues of the government enormously increased; but Diaz' successors had to undertake the complex and delicate task of undoing much of what Diaz had done. They had to regain national ownership of the wealth which Diaz had lavished upon foreigners; and they had to change the Indians from peons back again into independent peasants".¹

In effect, those who were to undo all that Diaz had done had been awaiting the first opportunity to begin their activities. This came in 1908 when Creelman, an American journalist who had an interview with Diaz, was told by him that he would welcome the development of political parties, which had been suppressed during his administration. People have argued about the motives of this declaration. Some have seen in it the astute old dictator using bait to bring his enemies out of hiding, and thus more easily to destroy them. Others have argued that it was the sincere desire of an old man who,

1. Parkes, H. B., AHM, p. 286-87.

with the good of his country at heart, wished to pass to his grave with the feeling that he had left behind him a permanent and peaceful political institution.¹ Whatever the motive may have been, the effect was the same. The upholders of freedom and democracy came to the front and shortly after were well organized into groups. Diaz' statement gave the people an opportunity for political organization in order to exercise effectively the free right of vote in the elections for President of the Republic, deputies and senators, and magistrates of the Supreme Court, elections which were to take place during the month of June, 1910.²

It would be irrelevant to give an account of the diverse phases of the subsequent political campaigns; such a thing would fall outside the scope of this work. But the parties opposing the official candidacy appointed as their candidate Francisco I. Madero as President, and as Vice-President Francisco Vazquez Gomez was nominated. The official element formed by the party called "Scientific" and the militant clericals opposed such candidates with the result that in the elections of the month of June, owing to official pressure, President Diaz was again re-elected. Madero, the popular candidate, urged Congress to declare the presidential elections void; and as the Congress ignored the demand, in

1. Tannenbaum, F., PR, p. 134.

2. Parkes, H. B., AHM, p. 314; Leon, N., CHGM, p. 515 ff.; Rabasa, E., LCD, p. 73; Portes Gil E., LPCC, p. 83.

October 1910 Madero proclaimed his revolutionary program called "Plan de San Luis Potosi". Article 1 of this plan declared void the elections of the President and Vice-president of the Republic, of representatives and of senators, and of magistrates of the Supreme Court. Article 2 disclaimed allegiance to the government of General Diaz and to all the authorities appointed by him. The final paragraph of Article 3 reads: "Owing to the unfair application of the Law of vacant lands, a great number of small holders, mostly Indians, have been deprived of their lands by order of the Ministry of Agriculture or by sentence of the Courts, and it being an act of justice to restore to their former owners the lands of which they have been deprived in so arbitrary a manner, those orders and sentences are declared subject to revision and those individuals and their heirs who acquired such properties in so immoral a fashion will be obliged to restore them to their original owners with an indemnity for the damages caused. Only in the case that such property should have passed into the hands of a third party before the proclamation of this Plan, the former owners should receive an indemnity from those in whose benefit the properties had been awarded."¹ Article 4 prescribed as supreme law the principle of "No re-election", and in virtue of Art-

1. Rabasa, E., LCD, p. 112.

icle 5 Madero assumed the provisional presidency of the
¹
 Republic.

From the very beginning of the struggle the Clergy sided openly with the dictatorship, the press subsidized by the Church attacked the new champion of freedom and democracy, and when the Clergy took cognizance of the clear and precise terms of Article 3, they became alarmed and prepared themselves for action. Such an attitude was natural on their part for Article 3 prescribed the revision of the decisions given by the Ministry of Agriculture in the matter of vacant lands and also the revision of the sentences pronounced by the authorities in the matter of land, and as the Clergy owned large holdings which would fall under these dispositions, they
²
 became a relentless enemy of the new regime.

But the Revolution triumphed and took over the government. Its enemies, the partisans of General Diaz and the Clergy, kept on conspiring against it in spite of the fact that a great number of them, taking advantage of the opportunity afforded them by the principle of "Effective Suffrage and No Re-election" were able to hold seats in Congress and posts in the administration
³
 against which they had conspired openly.

As a result of the connection between the followers of the past regime and the clerical elements,

1. Leon, N., CHGM, p. 517 ff.

2. Ibid., P. 521; Toro, A., IEM, 360.

3. Rabasa, E., LCD, p. 118 ff.

General Pascual Orozco in July 1912 raised the standard of rebellion in the State of Chihuahua, which was put down in a short time because of its lack of popularity and prestige.¹ The same causes gave rise to a rebellion in the port of Veracruz led by General Felix Diaz who was again aided by the Clergy of that place; the outcome of this rebellion was the capture of Diaz, who was court-martialled and condemned to death.²

This, in broad outlines, was the attitude of the Mexican Clergy from 1874 to 1913; unfortunately for them, all through the history of the nation the turning-points, the periods marking the close of a civilization and the opening of a new one, have found them on the wrong side. They fought for Spain, they fought for Maximilian, and they stood for Diaz when the social and political doctrines of the new century were introduced into Mexico by that Apostle of democracy who, confident in the future of his people, built the foundations for the structure which is still being built: Francisco I. Madero.

1. Leon, N., CHGM, p. 524.

2. Toro, A., IEM, p. 359.

CHAPTER V

CLERICAL AND SOCIAL EVOLUTION.

V. CLERICALISM AND SOCIAL EVOLUTION.

We are told that the Roman Catholic Church in Mexico never failed to show proper concern for the social problems of the country. Archbishop Mora y del Rio pointed out in 1925 that as far back as 1903 the first National Catholic Congress had discussed labor problems. He recalled that Dr. Jose Refugio Galindo had traveled over the country "as an apostle of Catholic agrarianism" years before the Madero revolution. He also cited a program adopted in 1913 by the National Confederation of Catholic Workmen's Circles, which included compulsory arbitration.¹ The Archbishop must have had reason to make such declarations; similar statements were also made during the crisis of 1934 by Catholic Prelates.² The writer knows a Catholic village priest who engaged in such activities as agrarian organizations among his people. And yet one cannot see how the Church with "apostles of Catholic agrarianism years before the Madero revolution", which had as one of its aims the breaking up of the vast landholdings established during the Diaz' administration, with the object of distributing the lands to the peasants (agrarianism), gave vent to unrestrained rejoicing as proved by the public manifestations held in different towns in the country on the 24th and the 25th of February, 1913,

1. Plenn, J. H., MI p. 203.

2. See MacFarland, S. C., 143 ff.

when Huerta murdered Madero and his Vice-President, Pino
¹
 Suarez. We even have proof to demonstrate that the Church
 aided Huerta with 10.000.000 pesos to overthrow the Gov-
²
 ernment of Madero.

There existed, when General Diaz took over the reins of Government, a legal situation well consolidated along the lines set by the Constitution of 1857 and the Reformation Laws which he had once helped to maintain. The problem before him was not, therefore, a legislative but a merely executive one. And the method he adopted was responsible for the sad events that ultimately forced him to leave the country. Using his conciliatory policy the clerical party gradually worked its way into the administration until it obtained control of the situation once more, and Mexico became the land graphically described in a phrase which was often repeated among the Spanish and other foreign clergy during the last decade of the rule ³ of Diaz: "Mexico is the paradise of religious orders". They succeeded in recovering their former predominance with the complicity of those authorities whose duty it was to enforce the laws.

The Clergy had no real cause for complaint at that time; it is true that instruction in Government schools was non-religious, but only the destitute attended them, and they yielded nothing unless it be their work.

1. Portes Gil, E., LPCC, p. 84.

2. Toro, A., IEM, p. 360.

3. Trejo, C. L. T., LRN, p. 256.

Those who could secure an education were those who were able to pay for it in the Church-controlled schools, where they were not only given a Catholic education but were moreover taught to fight against the Government schools.¹

The Clergy had found a very simple way to evade the law; all those religious corporations known as churchs were forbidden to own landed property; but the members of such corporations could, so the Catholic prelates interpreted, individually possess it. It was sufficient, therefore, in that tolerant atmosphere, to register such property in the name of some given person, even that of the Arch-bishop himslef, unless the particular occasion demanded that it should be registered in the name of foreign or Mexican companies, the civil character of which appeared to be beyond question.²

The Madero Revolution had as its aims the destruction of all the abuses that had grown up during the administration of President diaz, the restoration of the Constitution and the Laws of Reformation, and the solution of the problems of the country, which had been entirely overlooked by the censurable policy of conciliation followed by him. But on Madero's triumph, he found urgent problems demanding immediate solution; the situation of those who were starving as consequence of the semi-

1. Toro, A., IEM, p. 364.
2. Portes Gil, E., p. 86.

slavery to which they had been subjected, the Indians, the peasants, etc. There were also problems of the reorganization of the administration, and others of a political and economic character. He found that he had nothing to work with except the poorly prepared men who had assisted him to carry on his Revolution, and he was therefore compelled to resort to the services of many of those who had been supporters of the old regime in order not to fall into a chaotic condition. Very soon, however, they betrayed him, before he had time even to begin the task of restoring the Constitution. When Victoriano Huerta overthrew Madero, he sought to win the sympathy of the Clergy by invoking the name of God in the meeting with Congress, and the Clergy looked upon him as their champion and accepted his government as the lawful one, while the rest of the world condemned his ¹ vile crime. It is not surprising therefore, to see how bitterly the army of Carranza, who carried on the Revolution begun by Madero, more than once showed their anti-clerical tendencies, which compelled the church authorities to view that army ² with the greatest terror.

Once victory had been achieved by the army of the Revolution, its leaders realized the need of drawing up a new Constitution that would, on the one hand, eliminate the facilities of which the reactionary party had

1. Ibid., p. 87; Parkes, H. B., AHM, p. 325 ff.

2. Marett, R. H. K., AHM, p. 110-111.

availed itself for counteracting, on every ground, the enforcement of nearly all those principles which had inspired the Constitution of 1857 and the Laws of Reformation, and on the other, bring those principles into closer accord with the existing situation, and adjust them to the times for the purpose of meeting the present needs of the Mexican people.

The framers of this Constitution met in 1917. We may here analyse what that new Constitution was going to provide with respect to the Clergy. It was no longer enough that the principle of the legal ability of the Church to own real property or mortgages thereon should continue to stand, as it had, during that lengthy period of tolerance and dissimulation, by the organization of Church property on a legal footing by purchasing it through outsiders to whom such property was deeded. As the object aimed at by the Constitution of 1857 in depriving the Clergy of their property was still as urgent as during that period, inasmuch as the Clergy had regained their material prosperity and their control upon the conscience of the people, the need was equally pressing to take measures for attaining that purpose; and as it no longer would be sufficient to declare that the Church was incapable of owning property, nor that such property was transferred to the Nation, as it was secretly

possessed through third persons, it was found necessary to go still further, to act in accordance with realities as they existed at the time and to provide for nationalization of that property even though it were in the possession of third parties. The situation, however, involved difficulties of an almost unsurmountable nature. Proof had to be given that property purporting to have been purchased by a given person or corporation in reality belonged to the Church.

But why should the Church be condemned to possess nothing at all? Because, says Portes Gil, she has never acquired property legally; because she has always attempted to accumulate the land, to monopolize it, to the detriment of the nations' economic development; because she has used her property to instigate revolts; because she, with the help of the aristocracy, and on occasions with that of the army, has taken the property of the people away without making full restitution; because she has always indulged in luxury while the people are starving at her doors; and because she has always made claims which, if granted by the State, would make her the ruler of the country: she would become a state within a state.¹

What these claims are it is very easy to understand. They are the same claims she made centuries ago in Europe. She has created round about herself and her dogmas

1. Portes Gil E., LPCC, p. 88.

a complete philosophy which embraces every branch not only of human wisdom but also of human activity. The Roman Catholic Church in Mexico maintains that she is the representative of Christ on earth, that she is in possession of absolute and incontrovertible truth in regard to the ultimate destiny of man, and of the means of achieving it; that the Pope stands in the place and stead of God in his relation with mankind, and that his words are infallible in matters of dogma and morals. All these claims are known world-wide. Postulates of this sort led to a series of conclusions whereby the Church gradually possessed the whole of mankind and of everything belonging to man. That being so, it was to be inferred as a necessary consequence that the ends of the Church as being connected with the ultimate destiny of man, were the most perfect of all, and therefore that the State, the action of which is confined to matters connected with the temporal welfare of man, is to a certain extent inferior to her and must be subordinate to her. The conclusion thus drawn is quite logical; those acts which are "directly conducive to a more immediate purpose, such as temporal welfare, must be subordinated to those others which are conducive to eternal blessedness; so that if a man as a member or as the head of a State, is to do this or that, because according to his understanding it is the best way of compassing temporal welfare, and such action is not the best fitted for obtaining

the ultimate purpose, he must sacrifice temporal welfare and act in accord with the rules relating to the ultimate purpose". At this point the infallible Pope with divine authority to decide as to which is the adequate way to act and to reach the ultimate purpose, claims also that he has right and power to decide how the leader of a State must act both in his private and in his public life. And so the Church, through her Pope, claims the power, granted by divine right, to direct the State and authority to govern the world.

All this is neither false nor exaggerated; these are the same principles taught in all philosophical and theological seminaries of the Roman Church, and these same principles began to be put into practice by Pope Leo III when he crowned Charlemagne as Emperor, thus proclaiming that his sanction was necessary in order that an emperor or a king might be recognized as such. And if the Pope could crown kings, was he not entitled also to depose them?

Once the Church became mistress of all the known western world, once her Pope had proclaimed himself the king, the arbiter of the destinies of all the nations, she fell into a prostitution, the abuses and excesses of which one does not have to inquire from the unbeliever, for it is enough to read the works of the Catholic theologians of that time to be convinced that in this regard it is entirely unnecessary to describe the shameful acts, the most

unrestrained simony, the absolute impudence, godlessness and hypocrisy against which Luther and the Reformers protested and launched their most severe condemnations, And yet they are doctrines and practices of the Mexican Catholic Church even today. The Catholic Clergy continue to a certain extent to be the same, and unless they adapt themselves to the transformation of the life of Mexico of today, they will have to expect nothing but disaster. They maintain that the Church must rule the country, for the Church is infallible and all her verdicts are unmistakably true. And Christianity in a sense must direct the life of the people; we recognize that; but its methods are nobler and higher than those adopted by the Church authorities, which certainly are not the methods of the meek and humble Christ.

The Clergy formed a bitter enemy which the Constitution of 1857 had to face. And in 1917 it found itself again facing that same enemy. Thus in the Constitution of 1917 it was necessary to extend non-religious education to private schools and to exclude priests from them; for the first step taken in 1857 had not from the start achieved its purpose, as already stated, inasmuch as private schools monopolized primary instruction almost in toto and continued to be a nursery for future allies of the Clergy in their task of retarding and hindering the work of freeing the conscience and the mind of the people. It was

necessary to stop the flow of legacies obtained by the Clergy by rendering them incapable of inheriting from any one not related to them within the fourth degree; and it was necessary to restrict their activities to the purely spiritual function of the Church.¹

The reception of the new Constitution by the Clergy was not any better than their reception of the Constitution of 1857. The first thing they did was to publish a protest in the United States as soon as it was proclaimed, which protest was reproduced in 1926 when the constitutional principles bearing on those matters in which they were interested began to be carried out in a regular manner.² But the Clergy knew only too well that General Carranza would not, at the moment, be able to put into effect the new Constitution. The civil war just brought to a close left pressing problems which called for immediate solution--the peons were demanding the distribution of lands all over the country, the nation's finances, the organization of the Government--all these problems demanded the immediate attention of General Carranza; the question of the Church and the nationalization of her property remained untouched, and therefore so far as the religious question was concerned, the status quo was practically maintained, and aside from the protest issued in United States the Clergy made no attempt to

1. See Articles III, V, XXII, and CLX of the Constitution.

2. See copy of the protest in Toro, A., TEM, p. 399-402.

present a firmer opposition to the Constitution. On the other hand, taking opportunity of Carranza's inevitable leniency, they did introduce men into the public offices and Congress in order to prevent, through their influence. The confiscation of the Church's property.

To a large extent, under the administration of President Obregon things remained about the same, for his government confined itself to educational and economic questions. The only event of importance was, so far as the Church was concerned, the visit to the country of Monsignor Filippi and Monsignor Caruana as Papal Delegates. The purpose of their visit never was clearly known; Portes Gil believes that their intention was to test how far the Government's toleration extended.¹ Whether this was their aim in coming to Mexico is not certain, but the results were the same. According to Article 33 of the Constitution "the Executive of the Union has the exclusive faculty to ask to leave the country, immediately and without previous trial, all aliens whose permanence be deemed inconvenient". The Papal Delegates were classified as undesirable aliens; probably because they officiated at religious ceremonies in public thus violating Article 130 of the Constitution; they were, consequently, compelled to leave the nation. The Archbishops sent a note to President Obregon requesting the cancella-

1. Portes Gil, LPCC, p. 93.

tion of the decree of expulsion. No clearer statement could be given in regard to the attitude of the Revolution towards religion than the reply which President Obregon sent to the Archbishops, to part of which we have elsewhere referred.¹ "Messrs. the Archbishops: The executive under my charge has read the document that you were pleased to address to him, on the fifteenth instant in connection with the expulsion of Monsignor Filippi and Caruana. The Mexican Government considers that the repetition of these unfortunate incidents and of this constant friction between Mexico's traditional Liberal Party and certain members of the Catholic Church could be avoided, if you on your side would show a little good will. The principles which inspire the work being done by my Government are fundamentally Christian, and our program cannot be the cause of the slightest injury to the fundamental program of the Catholic Church. A little sincerity and good faith on the part of the dignitaries of the Church whose duty it is to carry out that Catholic program would be sufficient for the existence of the fullest harmony between the work of the religious administration and that of the revolutionary administration, which likewise is of a wholly pious character. The fundamental program of the Catholic Church, as presented by its theologians and teachers, consists above all in leading

1. See page 5.

souls along the path of morality, virtue and brotherhood, in the widest sense of the words, aiming on the bases of these purposes to achieve a greater well-being for the spiritual and the moral life. The fundamental postulates of the present Government can be summed up in these words: To guide all the people of Mexico along the path of morality, virtue, and brotherhood-using those terms in their broadest sense--aiming on the bases of these purposes a greater well-being for the national life. If both these programs could be realized, it is obvious that we would achieve the maximum well-being of all the inhabitants of this country, as we would have definitely obtained for them happiness in this life and in the next. I very sincerely regret the fact that the members of the higher Catholic Clergy have not understood the transformation which has taken place in a community with modern tendencies...I invite you, for the good of humanity, not to distort nor to hinder the carrying out of the essentially Christian and humane program which we are endeavoring to unfold in our country, where the oppressed classes have over so many long years suffered the hardships of injustice of every kind and from an absolute absence of anything like a spirit of brotherhood and of equity".....¹

1. Ibid. p. 100.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

VI. CONCLUSION

There are revolutions, and there is a Mexican Revolution. A distinction should be made between these terms which, if not absolute, is real and precise. For there are revolutions which consist in violent transfers of governmental authority, with virtual return to the old order after the upheavals are past; and there are revolutions as progressive transformations of the national life of a country. There are revolutions which are better described in terms of "cuartelazos", "montoneras", or "pronunciamientos" in the history of the Latin-American countries, which are but armed upheavals that arise from the dissatisfaction of a few politicians and are directed toward the fulfilment of their own selfish desires. And there are revolutions as processes whereby the life of a nation is, usually through modern cultural and scientific means, transformed from a lower to a higher level in every regard; thus we speak of the French Revolution and the Mexican Revolution. Revolutions of the first type have been means to specific ends, that is to say, they have merely been political instruments; those of the second, being a process, have been an end in themselves. The Mexican Revolution belongs to the latter type; for it is a process whereby the "mestizo", who constitutes the

majority of the population, is attaining racial, political, cultural, and economic predominance within a geographical area which originally contained two very distinct peoples and cultures, namely the Spanish and the Indian.

In the midst of the active opposition of aristocracy and of the Church with all their conservatism, with much painful labor--and it is these birth pangs which constitute the Revolutionary movement--a new homogeneous nation is being brought into the world. In the midst of attacks and disappointments, inherent in any process of social evolution, the principles of the Mexican Revolution are still being carried on towards their realization.

As we have seen already, the administrations that followed the drawing up of the Constitution of 1917 were unable to enforce all its regulations. It was during the administration of President Plutarco Elias Calles that the enforcement of those provisions regarding the Church did actually begin. Regulations were enacted for Article 130 which orders the Clergy to enter their names in an official register and to draw up inventories of the things in the churches. From a legal standpoint the State owns the buildings which the Church uses for religious purposes and all the things in them, and therefore the clergyman in charge of any particular church is held responsible for them. From the religious point of view, it is his duty to teach and to preach and to administer the sacraments;

from the standpoint of the State he has also the duty to keep the building in good condition, and to see that nothing is taken out of or brought into it without the previous permission of the State. An inventory of the things in it, made before the priest and the ten delegates of the congregation and a State representative is, consequently, necessary. But to do this would mean the Church's recognition of the title of ownership on the part of the State, a title which the former has always denied the latter. Conflict broke out again; the Archbishop of Mexico addressed a circular to all the clergy, one of the paragraphs of which read as follows: "We forbid priests to communicate to the civil authorities the churches administered by them and we likewise forbid them to enter their names in the civil register".¹ The publishing of this circular was followed by the reproduction of the protest published in United States against the Constitution of 1917, signed by all the Archbishops and the Bishops of Mexico,² a protest which was backed by another pastoral of the American Episcopate. Both these protests tended to create an atmosphere hostile to Mexico. In fact, they invited and encouraged foreign associations to attack the country, as in the case of the Knights of Columbus when they, at their Philadelphia Convention, addressed a

1. Toro, A., IEM, p. 384

2. See page 114

request to the President of United States and to other organizations, parts of which read as follows: "We request the President of the Republic and the State Department to put an end to the ignominious contempt shown by Calles for the American demands for protection of American citizens. We specially call the attention of the 'American Federation of Labor' and all its organizations, to this appeal of co-operation with us to save not only American rights, but also the hard gains of labor itself. . . . As to the Knights of Columbus of Mexico, we ask them not to dismay. . . We are authorizing our Supreme Council to collect one million dollars for a campaign of education. . With these purposes we promise the support of 800,000 men who love God!" . . .¹

In view of the obstinacy of the Clergy, the Government declared that ministers were forbidden to officiate unless they registered according to the law.² This decree was followed by the banishment of nuns and monks from forbidden convents and monasteries and by actual seizure of churches. The National League for Defense of Religious Liberty retaliated, with the approval of the Mexican Prelates, by declaring a paralization of the economic and social life of Mexico. As this economic boycott did not produce the desired objectives, the Clergy provoked an armed rebellion which, while failing

1. Portes Gil, E., LPCC, p. 106

2. Toro, A., 390-391

to endanger the stability of the Government, yet cost the country a great deal of blood and losses, without leading to anything whatever. The Church's armies were led by priests who did not hesitate to commit crimes which aroused the indignation of many catholics. A typical example of these crimes was the assault of the train of Guadalajara which was put to fire without giving time to its occupants, children and women included, to vacate it; other priests, like Angulo and Torres, ransacked and burned entire villages in the States of Michoacan and Jalisco.

The atrocities of the rebels, as noted above, aroused the indignation even of the catholics. Some of the bishops of Mexico were entirely opposed to the armed rebellion; the American prelates declared: "The Christian principles forbid the Church founded by the Prince of Peace, to raise the sword or to trust in carnal weapons which the passions of men prefer to take. If the Church has learned many things in her life of two thousand years, the main lesson has been given by the patience and forbearance of her Divine Founder. She is not disposed to die, but she has learned to suffer. With Him she will be sacrificed, but with Him also she will rise. The arms of men cannot reach her. But if the Church is not to use those human weapons, she

on the other hand has one subject to herself, forged
 as it is in justice and in truth: Prayer".¹

This statement and the fact that some Mexican Bishops were opposed to the armed rebellion have been used as the basis for the assertion of some Church authorities that the Clergy did not provoke and approve it. But one has only to read such statements as that of Archbishop Mora in "El Universal" of February 4, 1926, to be convinced of the falsity of their assertion. Another document of the same kind is the pastoral letter which the Archbishop of Durango sent from Rome on February 11, 1927, and reads in part: "We never provoked this armed movement. But since that movement does exist, after all peaceful means have been exhausted, to our catholic children who are fighting for the defence of their social and religious rights, after thinking it over before God and after consulting the most learned theologians in the city of Rome, we must say: Have your conscience at peace and receive our blessing".²

"All the arguments advanced by the Church for guiding education on the basis of specific dogmas were brought into play to defend the government's position. The Churchmen, past masters of absolutism, intolerance, monopoly, appeared as advocates of liberalism, tolerance, freedom of worship. But the two sets of

1. Toro, A., IEM, p. 394.

2. Ibid, p. 395.

values seemed irreconcilable, just as the association of the high clergy with the big landowners could not be reconciled with the peasant's demands for land."¹

While men on both bands were bitterly fighting in several places, elections were held for Calles' successor. General Obregon was again elected but he was not to rule. His attitude to the Church as stated above did not meet with the desires and the approval of the Clergy, and their hostile activities reached a climax when they formed a plot against him, and under their instigation, Jose de Leon Toral assassinated him on July 18, 1928; the murderer was sentenced to death and two close accomplices, a priest and a nun, were condemned to prison for life.²³

At last in 1929 an agreement was reached between Portes Gil as Provisional President and the Clergy, whereby the latter decided to conform to the laws upon promise of the Government not to interfere with the Church's activities. The Clergy also promised not to intervene in the affairs of the State. For the moment it was believed that at last the two powers would work in harmony. These hopes fell to the ground with the publication of the Papal Encyclical, *Acerba Animi*, which denied the right to the State to legislate in regard to the number of priests that were to officiate in the

1. Plenn, J. H., MM, p. 203.

2. See page 116 ff.

3. Portes Gil, E., LPCC, p. 109.

country. Two years later Congress approved the amendment of Article III of the Constitution which established socialistic education. The Clergy charged that the Government had not lived up to the 1929 agreement, that new drives against the Church were being carried on in various States. The Government said that the encyclical was a repudiation of the agreement, and that it openly incited Catholics to rebellion against the Mexican Constitution. Archbishop Leopoldo Ruiz y Flores, the Apostolic Delegate, published a message of protest in which he warned of tyranny that would come as a result of President-elect Lazaro Cardenas' repudiation of freedom of teaching. The message said that no Catholic could be a member of the National Revolutionary Party, and also cast doubts on the legitimacy of the Revolution by stating that its triumph was due to the "frank and decided protection of the United States President Woodrow Wilson and its maintenance to the protection of the United States Government".¹

Article III of the Constitution originally read: "Teaching shall be free; but that which will be imparted in the official establishments of education, as well as primary teaching imparted in private schools, shall be lay" (laica). The same Article as amended reads as follows: "Education imparted by the State shall

1. Plenn, J. H., MM, p. 204.

be socialistic, and furthermore will exclude all religious doctrines and combat fanaticism and prejudices, and toward this end the school shall organize its teachings and activities so as to imbue in the young a rational and exact concept of the universe and of social life. Only the State federation, States, municipalities shall impart primary, secondary and normal education. Permission may be granted private individuals who desire to impart education in any of these grades, but always subject to the following norms....." A list of requirements follows which can be summarized in two sentences:

(1) Ministers of religion are forbidden to teach in schools, whether private or public; (2) Private schools are permitted to function, but are to be supervised by inspectors of the Federal Department of Education.

With this amendment a new step was made in the process of education in Mexico. A letter of the Minister of Education addressed to Mr. Charles MacFarland, who went to Mexico to make a study of the conflict which arose between the State and Church authorities with motive of the amendment in question, read in part: "With the new text of Article III of the Constitution a new step has been made in popular culture, in relation to the historic periods of our education. These were: theocratic in the period before the conquest; over-

powered by religious dogma during the colonial period, and until the time of the separation of the Church and the State by the Reformation Laws; predominantly positivist in the official establishments and theological in the private schools during the Porfirio Diaz' regime. With the publication of the Constitution in 1917, the State set forth the lay teaching, limiting the ascendancy of the Clergy who under the protection of liberty mutilated the intelligence of childhood, imposing traditional dogmas which were contrary to scientific progress, and to the principles of the political, economic and moral emancipation of the masses. With the reform of the above-mentioned precept of the Constitution, the public power recovered fully the guidance of childhood and youth, permitting them to create a rational concept of the universe and of the social life, repelling the imposition of all religious doctrine by the instructors, in order to substitute for fanaticism and social prejudices, scientific truth.

"When the Constitution set forth that the teaching which the State imparts shall be socialistic, the Revolution completed its economic, human and cultural work, proclaiming the social function of education, with the same right that it, (the Revolution) sustained the social function of property when it proclaimed in its

Magna Carta the just distribution of land and the just compensation of effort for millions of workers".¹

A war of words followed the passing of the bill establishing "socialistic education". About the same time when the Apostolic Delegate published his message of protest, Bishop Jose de Jesus Manrique y Zarate of Huejutla, issued his "Third Message to the Civilized World", in which he challenged Calles' statement to the effect that the children of the nation should belong to the Revolution. He described the new program of education as a "Jewish-Masonic plan of which Calles is a worthy bearer".² On September 8, 1935, all the Archbishops and Bishops of Mexico issued a joint pastoral letter on the "Civic Duties of the Catholics". The ecclesiastical authorities previously had threatened excommunication of parents who sent their children to socialistic education schools and of teachers who taught there. In their letter they flatly defended the intervention of the Church in matters of "culture and progress" and rejected the theory that the Church should confine itself to "the narrow limits of temples and the intimate sanctuaries of the conscience". They said that the Church should organize "and direct the integral life of man by means of its moral doctrines in all the spheres of human life...and action, within institutions and groups

1. MacFarland, C. S., CIM, p. 81.

2. Marett, R. H. K., AEM, p. 122.

seeking....a better life, in the efforts of science toward investigation of truth and in the efforts of labor to obtain for the worker and peasant more abundant daily bread..." They described the tasks "awaiting the Church" in civic, economic and political fields and called on the Catholics to use their rights as citizens to bring about ¹ repeal of the "laws of persecution". The document was regarded as a renewal of the Clergy's challenge of the Mexican Constitution. The contest, however, did not go to the length that previous conflicts had reached. Whether it was because the workers and peasants had at last caught the principles of the Revolution and were therefore less susceptible to the appeals of the Clergy to form an army and fight by force, or whether both the civil and the ecclesiastical authorities had realized the futility of the use of arms is difficult to determine. Rather than give place to another civil war, President Cardenas declared in 1936: "To break down the resistance of fanatics egged on by the enemies of the Revolution, the people in the communities must be organized. In those States where this has been done, the efforts of the reactionaries are null and void....But this Government has no intentions of falling into the errors of previous administrations. The duty of a revolutionary administration

1. Plenn, J. H., MM, p. 205.

like the present consists in doing all that may be necessary to carry out the program of the Revolution, the fundamental aspects of which are economic and social in character.... It is no concern of the Government to undertake anti-religious campaigns, since all that is obtained thereby is a fruitless waste of the efforts of public servants, provocation of resistance and postponement, for an indefinite time, of economic and social principles basically essential to the well-being of the people. Action by organized masses in the fight against fanaticism and in support of the Socialistic school is the best safeguard for the lives of their own members, for that of the teachers of their children, and for the social, economic, and spiritual emancipation of the ¹ people".

A new Archbishop of Mexico was appointed, Luis M. Martinez, previously Bishop of Michoacan, President Cardenas' home state. It was probably just a coincidence that a Michoacan prelate should be called to the capital when a man of Michoacan was President. At any rate, the following statement of the new Archbishop, made in 1938, seems to indicate that, at least for the time being, Church and State have come to an understanding:

"In truth, it is worth while to sacrifice our own ideas, excellent as we deem them, in order to main-

1. Plenn, J. H., MM, p. 207.

tain unity with our brethren around the ideas which seem inferior to ours, but which will make us all one; it is worth while to desist from our aims, holy though they may be, in order that we may join our hearts to those of our brothers, for, according to St. Thomas, it is charity for man to want to realize the will of his fellow man as if it were his own, and it is a greater good to achieve concord and harmony among our brothers than to achieve realization of the highest ideas and the holiest aims".¹

Partly because of its ambiguity the term "socialistic education" has been the object of bitter discussion among many quarters of society. Catholic authorities condemned it at the beginning as being atheist; others have regarded as immoral some of its principles, as those related to sexual education; others still, while admitting that socialistic education will bring them closer to natural phenomena through its scientific method, fear that it will in time destroy entirely the spiritual values of life.²

Thus several questions arise in regard to the exact meaning of "socialistic education". Is it teaching a politico-social philosophy, or is it simply teaching about social relationships? Is it merely anti-Roman Catholic or is it anti-religious and atheist? Or again, is it mechanistic and humanistic, or does it give a

1. Plenn, J. H., MM, p. 207

2. Cf. Macfarland, C. S., CIM, p. 87 ff

spiritual conception of the universe? While I am not ready to answer fully these questions, I believe that one can, without much difficulty, discover what the general principles of socialistic education are.

So far as religion is concerned, there is no evidence to conclude that socialistic education is a drive against religion. The reform of Article III does not contain any atheistic propositions. The practice of religion is not attacked, but is left to the home and to the ministers of the different churches or religious denominations, all of whom are officially authorized by the Constitution. The words of the Article, "and furthermore will exclude all religious doctrines" do not mean, so far as I can see, that religion or the doctrine of any particular Church is to be destroyed. All that it means is that religious teaching is not to be included in the curriculum of the State schools.

That socialistic education is immoral is another of the charges made against the new educational system. It is true that after the amendment of Article III was passed in some sections of the country, as in Tabasco, the civil authorities committed some brutal acts, burned churches, murdered priests, stole their good, etc., when they misinterpreted the clause indicating that socialistic education will combat "fanaticism and prejudices". President Cardenas, incidentally, exiled Governor Garrido

Canabal and punished those who were responsible for those events in Tabasco. The fact, however, that a few isolated groups are led to such brutal acts because of their misinterpretation of the law does not mean that the law itself is immoral. In other words, socialistic education does not teach hatred between the social classes of the nation; rather it tends to create in children sentiments and ideas of human fraternity, and moral and economic rehabilitation of the society of today, in order that they may envisage a better organized community and that they may learn to correct the irritating inequalities at present existing in Mexico, according to the provisions of the Constitution.

Is socialistic education mechanistic and humanistic? If by this is meant that it will replace the old methods of teaching by the scientific method--which is what in the minds of many these terms seem to convey--a method which in other countries has for many years been adopted even in religious teaching, then socialistic teaching is mechanistic and humanistic. The adoption of the critical scientific method does not exclude, however, the possibility for any one to acquire a spiritual conception of the universe; and it is indeed a blessing that we have a Christian Church that preserves and defends for us those spiritual values which alone can give meaning to our finite existence. In this connection, I must note that perhaps

the root of the misunderstanding of Article III as amended lies in the clause, "so as to imbue in the young a rational and exact concept of the universe"; for science has never admitted or declared that we have arrived to an "exact" conception of the universe. It would be more proper to say that socialistic education gives to the teaching, through reason, induction, and experimentation, orientation with the purpose that the school shall accustom the pupils to explain, so far as it may be possible scientifically and otherwise, the phenomena of nature and of social life. "The carrying out of this object imposes upon those charged with imparting knowledge the duty of freeing the minds of the pupils from the prejudices which, as a social inheritance from past generations, have been conserved as an arbitrary explanation of the phenomena of the universe and are without any scientific basis".¹

In 1938, the Catholic ceremonials and rituals were more publicized and more elaborate than they had been for a long time. In the State of Chihuahua the parochial Eucharistic Congress was convened for the first time since 1926. Throughout the country in August 1939 there were elaborate three-day celebrations of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Catholic Association of Mexican Youth with attendant publicity and social functions.

In such states as Chiapas and Tabasco churches have been

1. MacFarland, C. S., CIM, p. 85

opened after keeping them closed for years. Beginning in October, 1938, for three months great religious festivities in which prelates from all over the country participated were held; the occasion was the inauguration of the magnificent Basilica of Guadalupe and the observance of the four hundredth anniversary of the "apparition of the Virgin of Guadalupe". New churches have been built by both Catholics and Protestants. All these events seem to indicate that the future of Christianity in Mexico is rather bright. But in order to enjoy that bright future the Church in Mexico will have to regenerate itself; she will have to go back and drink of the pure waters of the Gospel of Christ; her entire life and attitude towards those whom God has entrusted to her must be modified.

For Mexico needs a Church which should be, like her blessed Founder and Lord, humble; a Chruch free from luxury, with a spirit of self-sacrifice, self-immolation, and with a desire to minister to the spiritual as well as the physical well-being of the body of believers; a Chruch which must be imbued with the passionate love of aiding mankind; a Church which must stand with the poorest Mexican that he may have the vision of Christ, the comfort of his soul, the self-realization of his salvation, and at the same time stand with him in his demands for food and shelter, and schools for his children.

During the crisis of 1932-1934, it is said that

the late Pope Pius XI asked the support of the adherents of other churches to oppose the hard restrictions which the Government of the Revolution has placed upon the Church. If perchance there should be some day need for doing that I would be glad to respond to the request, even though he declared in recent years that these adherents were, not only outside the true Church, but that "all these are not of God".¹ The Roman Church in Mexico cannot ask the world to ignore past history in which her wrong-doing has resulted in injury to the people, especially in view of the fact that she has continued her attitude, in some measure, down to very near the present hour. That the Church is now in a different temper we have already pointed out. But she cannot appropriately demand the restoration of her freedom, nor can she ask those outside her fold to do so, unless she is ready to pledge herself to give to others the same liberty she asks for herself. She must never again, in Mexico or anywhere else, try to influence either State or people to suppress the liberty of worshippers who would pray in other than Catholic temples. She must not only correct the errors set forth in Portes Gil's and Toro's indictments, but she should analyse their statement to see how far it is true that she has, even in recent years, failed to eradicate superstition, how far she has sought and employed material and temporal as well

1. Ibid. p. 276

as spiritual weapons.

Christianity in Mexico, as in other countries, must be grounded on firmer soil; in these days when rivers are flowing and winds blowing, bringing with them all seeds of destruction and desolation which threaten to level down its very foundations, it must work, not against nor under the State, but in harmony with it, and thus seek a fresh discovery of the true meaning of personal, civil, and religious liberty, that it may give men a true spiritual conception of the universe, a true and clear vision of the Eternal Christ. After the terrible happenings in 1934, when a revolt of communist elements broke out in the north of Spain, addressing himself to the victorious Right Wing party, Unamuno pronounced these words which might very well be directed to the Roman Catholic Clergy of Mexico:

"Oh, if you had preached a Christ the friend of the poor instead of a Christ the friend of the wealthy; if you had preached a Christ the friend of the humble and suffering instead of a Christ the friend of the powerful and influential; a Christ the friend of sinners and criminals and not a Christ the friend of kings, aristocrats and honorable people, they would have accepted the true Christ of the Gospel. These are not days for justice, but for mercy and forgiveness; not days for bringing many to the gallows but days for calling one another friend and brother. Remember, remember, that you were sinners with great sins before they committed their great sins.¹

1. Quoted in Mackay, J. A., TUA, p. 102

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